# DOCTOR WHO AND THE DALEKS OMNIBUS

DOCTOR
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AND THE
DALEKS
OMNIBUS

Artus Books

# DOCTOR WHO AND THE DALEKS OMNIBUS

Edited by Terry Nation

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# FOREWORD

Some time in the middle of 1963 I was invited by the BBC to contribute to a new television series that was being prepared, titled 'Doctor Who'.

At a briefing about the series I learned that it was planned to run for thirteen weeks. I listened to the outline with growing but concealed dismay. Later I confided to my literary agent that it was amongst the worst series ideas I had ever heard. Further, I predicted that it would have little chance of surviving beyond its thirteen weeks' run.

Despite my worst forebodings I started work on a seven-part serial. The work progressed quickly and I delivered the manuscript a week or so later. I attended a few meetings about the production and shortly after that became involved in a new assignment that took me out of the country.

My absence prevented my having any part in a series of crises that then beset the production. Happily I heard of them only after they had been resolved. It seems that a number of executives had grave doubts about my episodes. Principal amongst these was Sydney Newman, then head of BBC-TV Drama, and the man who had originated the idea of Doctor Who. He had taken serious exception to certain of the characters in my scripts. His mind was firmly set against anything resembling what he called 'bug-eyed monsters', and he was determined that they would not appear in the show.

The brilliant young producer of the series, Verity Lambert, fought off criticism and doggedly resisted the changes that were requested. Ray Cusick, the designer, revealed his imaginative and exciting creations and the show was finally recorded.

When my first episode was screened I watched with total fascination and complete immodesty, thoroughly enjoying it. As the show ended my telephone began to ring and a nervous friend demanded 'What was that "thing" at the end?' The question was repeated many times during the next week.

The 'thing' of course was the very first glimpse of a Dalek. Sydney Newman's 'bug-eyed monster' that was so nearly exterminated before it had ever appeared.

Verity Lambert's faith was very soon justified. Within weeks the BBC were receiving literally hundreds of letters from excited children and adults.

In every school playground you could see youngsters gliding around, covered in cardboard boxes, their arms stuck firmly out in

front of them, chanting 'Exterminate. Exterminate'.

My prediction about the length of Doctor Who's run has proved slightly inaccurate. The thirteen episodes have turned into thirteen years. The Daleks have survived and plagued four different Doctors. They have appeared in more than thirty hours of television, starred in films, plays and books. It is fascinating and pleasing to know that Doctor Who and the Daleks continue to excite and entertain audiences and grow in popularity with each new adventure.

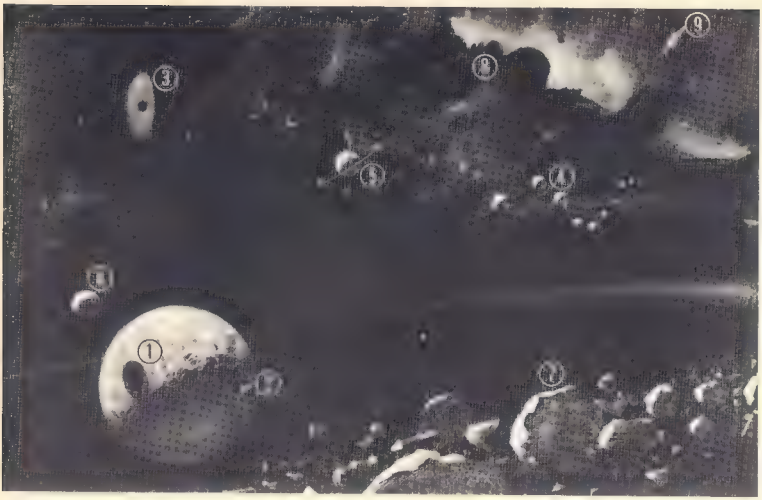
To all Doctor Who and the Daleks followers this book is respectfully and gratefully dedicated.

Terry Nation
Lynsted Park,
Kent.
*April, 1976*

The Daleks as they appeared in the television series, *Doctor Who and the Planet of the Daleks*.

THE SEVENTH GALAXY

# THE SEVENTH GALAXY




The Dalek planet, Skaro, is situated in the Seventh Galaxy. It lies far beyond the constellation Andromeda and is estimated to contain over one hundred thousand million stars, making it similar in size to the Milky Way, the galaxy to which our own solar system belongs.

Little is known of the Seventh Galaxy. Optical observations have identified some of the celestial bodies near Skaro, but visual research is much hampered by the light distortion caused by the constantly shifting clouds of burning gas.

Outside of Skaro there are few planets that could support any form of highly developed life. Satellite fly-bys have detected movement in the swampy oceans of the twin-ringed planet Phebeyus. Photographs taken by the satellite from a range of more than a thousand miles show shadowy images of things wallowing slowly through the ammonia seas. If indeed these are creatures they must be of fantastic size and bulk.

The thirteen-star chain known as 'The Serpent' is unique in the universe. Its undulating motion has no recognizable orbit. It appears to move through the galaxy totally without pattern, never retracing

its course.

The meteorite chain virtually encircles the galaxy. It is a band of vast boulders and space debris that provides an impenetrable wall more than five hundred miles deep.

Another unique star is the 'doughnut' shaped body called Oblivianus. Anything entering the gaping hole at the star's centre disappears. It is believed the process is similar to a 'Black Hole'.

Priority has been given to research on the Seventh Galaxy with the main objective of finding a planet on which the United Worlds could establish a military base that would put us in range of Skaro.

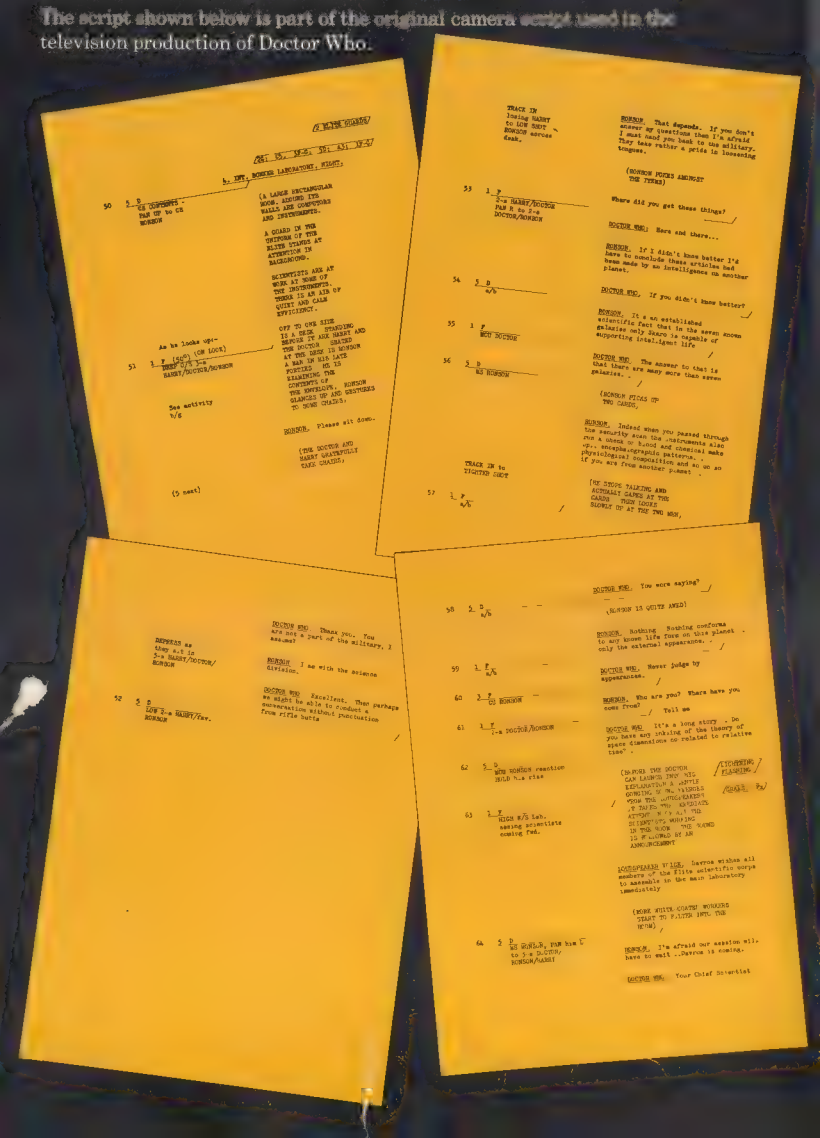
1. *The Planet Skaro.* The planet of the Daleks. Its dark side is known to support many species of unintelligent and hideous life forms.
2. *Falkus.* (See special feature on pages 86–9)
3. *Oblivanus.* The planet of destruction. Space craft venturing within a million miles are drawn toward it and vanish in its hollow centre.
4. *The Serpent.* Thirteen planets that appear to be linked together. They travel at a speed only slightly less than that of light (186,000 miles per second).
5. *Phebeyus.* The twin-ringed planet covered in a sea of ammonia.
6. *Omega Mysterium.* The planet of mystery. This is Skaro's 'moon' but is protected by a force field that has thus far prevented any landings. In the opinion of some this force field is not of natural origins. If this is so, it would suggest the planet holds intelligent life.
7. *The Meteorite Chain.* A wall of rocks hurtling through space at enormous speed.
8. *The Burning Clouds.* A slowly moving gaseous cloud of more than two million miles across. Anything it envelops is melted by the intense heat that it generates.
9. *The Milky Way.* Far far beyond this lies the planet Earth.

# ON CAMERA

(*Opposite*) Davros, in his specially-constructed self-powered wheel chair, which is a complete life-support system.

Davros in his control room, from the television series.

The script shown below is part of the original camera script used in the television production of Doctor Who.



A BLUE WORLD

ACT 10. M-2. SC. A3. 17-7

b. INT. ROBOTS LABORATORY. NIGHT.

50 2 D — CS DOORWAYS — PAN UP to CS ROBSON

(A LARGE RECTANGULAR ROOM, AROUND ITS WALLS ARE COMPUTERS AND INSTRUMENTS.

A GUARD ON THE UNIFORM OF THE ELITE STANDS AT ATTENTION IN BACKGROUND.

SCIENTISTS ARE AT WORK AT SOME OF THE INSTRUMENTS. THE INSTRUMENTS THERE IS AN AIR OF QUIET AND CALM EFFICIENCY.

OFF TO ONE SIDE IS A DESK. STANDING BY IT ARE HARRY AND ROBSON IN HIS LATE

THE DOCTOR IS SEATED AT THE DESK IN ROBSON A MAN IN HIS LATE FORTIES. HE IS EXAMINING THE CONTENTS OF THE ENVELOPE. ROBSON GLANCES UP AND GESTURES TO SOME CHAIRS)

As he looks up-

53 1 F (SOT) (ON LOOK) — HARRY P/S 2-a HARRY/DOCTOR/ROBSON

See activity n/s

ROBSON. Please sit down.

(THE DOCTOR AND HARRY GRATEFULLY TAKE CHAIRS)

(3 cuts)

TRACK IN leading HARRY to NEW SHOT - ROBSON across desk.

ROBSON. That depends. If you don't answer my questions then I'm afraid I must hand you back to the military. They take rather a pride in loosening tongues.

(ROBSON PUTS AMONGST THE PAPERS)

53 1 F — 2-a HARRY/ROBSON PAN R to 2-a DOCTOR/ROBSON

Where did you get these things?

DOCTOR WHO. Here and there...

ROBSON. If I didn't know better I'd have to conclude these articles had been made by an intelligence on another planet.

54 2 D — n/s

DOCTOR WHO. If you didn't know better?

55 1 F — MCU ROBSON

ROBSON. It's an established scientific fact that in the seven seven galaxies only Earth is capable of supporting intelligent life.

56 2 D — MS ROBSON

DOCTOR WHO. The answer to that is that there are many more than seven galaxies.

(ROBSON PICKS UP TWO CARDS.

ROBSON. Indeed when you passed through the security scan the instruments also run a check on blood and chemical make up.. Atomic, graphic patterns. Physiological foundation and so on and if you are from another planet -

(HE STOPS TALKING AND ACTUALLY GAWKS AT THE CARDS - THEY GLOW) SLOWLY UP AT THE TWO MEN.

TRACK IN to TIGHTER SHOT

57 1 F — n/s

58 2 D — n/s

DOCTOR WHO. You were saying?

(ROBSON IS QUITE AWED)

ROBSON. Nothing. Nothing conforms to any known life form on this planet - only the external appearance.

59 1 F n/s

DOCTOR WHO. Never judge by appearances.

60 2 F — CU ROBSON

ROBSON. Who are you? Where have you come from? Tell me

61 1 F — 2-a DOCTOR/ROBSON

DOCTOR WHO. It's a long story. Do you have any inkling of the theory of space dimensions as related to relative time?

62 2 D — MCU ROBSON reaction BUILD to a rise

(SLOWLY THE DOCTOR CAN LAUGHS INTO HIS EXPLANATION. A CIRCUIT GLOWING IN THE CONTROLBOARD FROM THE COMPUTERS A TAPE WHIRRS AS THE ATTACH M/C A.D. THE SCIENTISTS WORKING IN THE ROOM - THE SOUND IS FOLLOWED BY AN ANNOUNCEMENT

63 1 F — HIGH n/s Lab. seeing scientists coming fwd.

(LOOKING) (FLASHING)

(SOT) (ON)

LOUDSPEAKER VOICE. Doctor wishes all members of the Elite scientific corps to assemble in the main laboratory immediately.

(MORE WITH COATS! WORKERS START TO F. WITH INT. THE ROOM)

64 2 D — MS GUARD, PAN him L to 2-a D.DOOR, ROBSON/HARRY

ROBSON. I'm afraid our session will have to wait ..Doctor is coming.

DOCTOR WHO. Your Chief Scientist

# THE ANATOMY OF A DALEK

The major proportion of all research on Skaro is dedicated to the development and improvement of the Dalek. Incredible mechanical and electronic innovations have been made over the centuries all directed toward the aim, and the fulfilment of Davros's dream, of creating the perfect destructive machine. The Space Intelligence Service has released a report on its findings, but it must be recognised that many of the Daleks' inbuilt capabilities remain a mystery.

**SCANNER**
The 'eye' of the Dalek. It has telescopic magnification, Z and X ray capacity and infra-red night vision.

**AUDIO-SCANNERS**
Super-sensitve listening devices that are able to detect sound far beyond the spectrum of human hearing.

**COMBAT COMPUTOR**
A memory cell containing every known war manoeuvre and strategy Combat situations can be identified and reacted to in micro seconds.

**PHOTO-SONIC CELLS**
All images seen through the Dalek scanner and all sounds heard through the Audio Scans are stored here and are instantly retrievable.

**ENVIRONMENT CHAMBER**
The container in which the 'living' Dalek is housed.

**GRAV DEFLECTORS**
They allow the Dalek to remain in Skaro gravity conditions at all times.

**PSYCH ANALYSERS**
They give the Dalek the facility of what is virtually 'mind-reading' the thoughts of its enemies

**VOCAL SIMULATOR and TRANSLATOR UNIT**
The Dalek has no voice. Its thought processes are converted into sound patterns and projected as the harsh grating speech that we hear via the simulator. The translator unit automatically converts the speech into the language of the listener

**ETHERIC TRANSMITTER/RECEIVER**
Constantly operating sound and vision communications system directly linked to central command

**MULTI-RANGE VARIABLE POWER DESTRUCTOR**
This small weapon is capable of penetrating armour plating at a range of more than three miles.

**THE CONTROL ARM**
A powerful vacuum, combined with hydraulic action allows the Dalek to hold and lift fantastic weights.

**ELEMENT TO ENERGY CONVERTOR**
This converts all the natural elements of the atmosphere into usable energy

**AUTO-NAVIGATORS**
The unit is able to pinpoint precisely the exact geographic location of the Dalek anywhere in the Universe

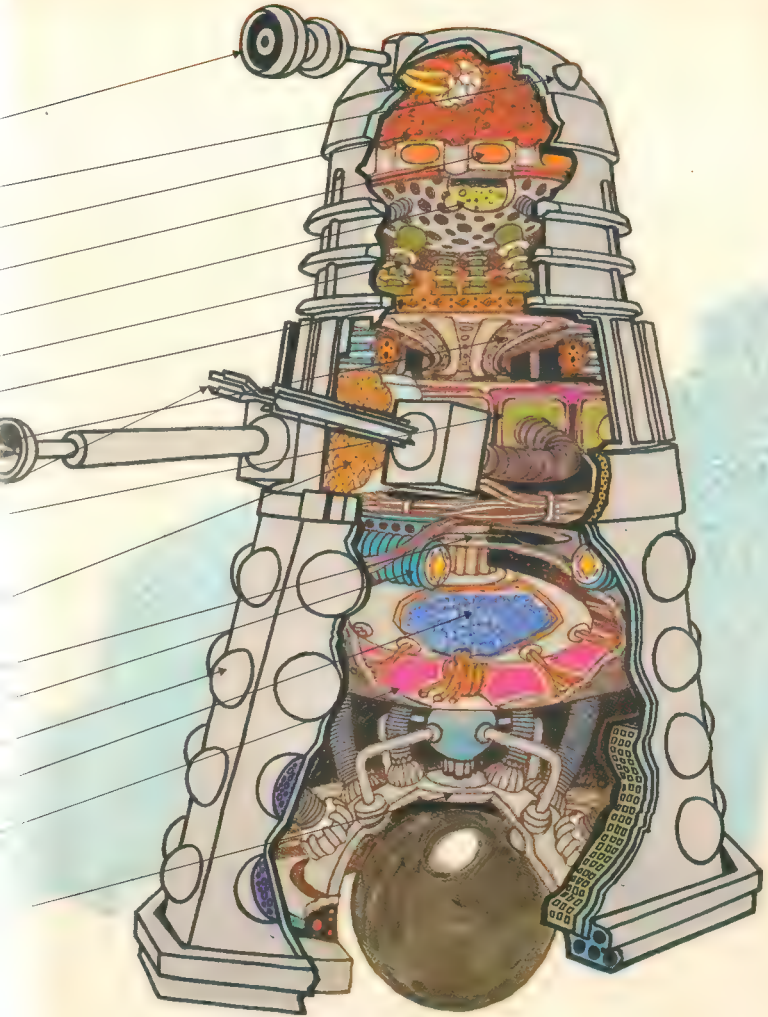
**AUTO REPAIR CIRCUITS**
Linked to a computor, these circuits analyse faults and damage and repair the affected sections

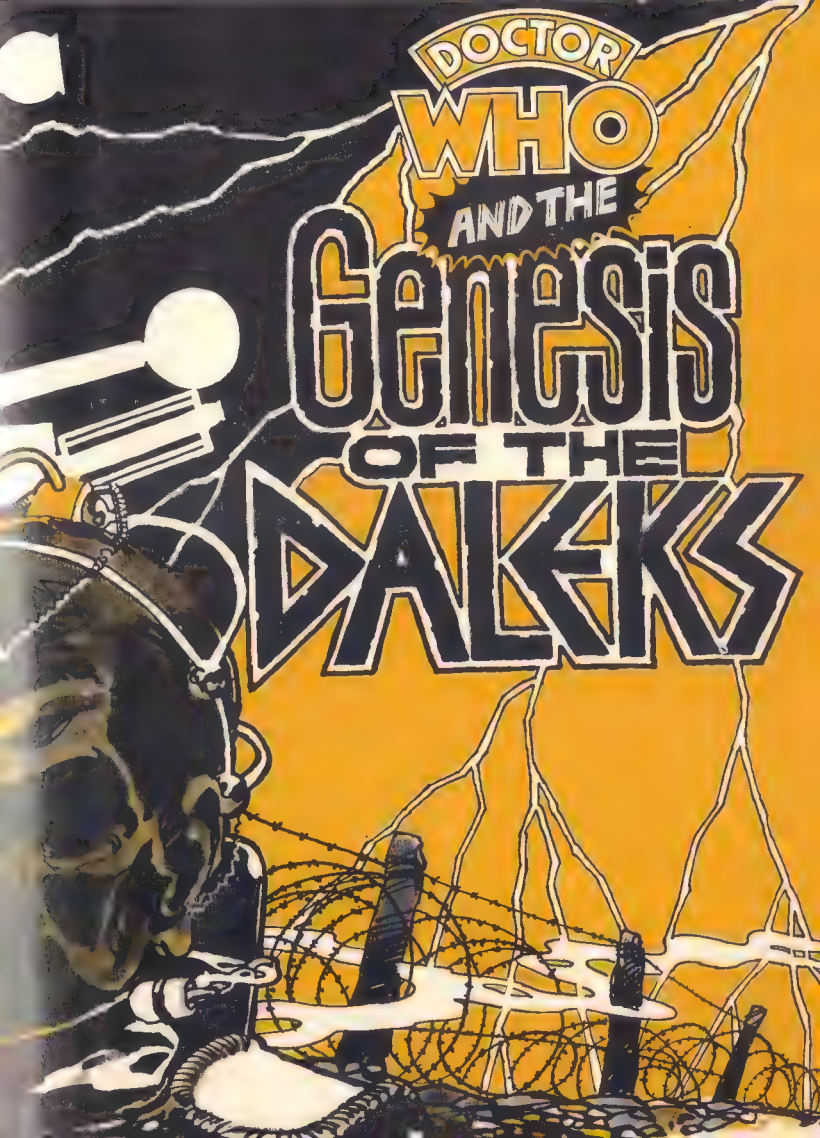
**HOSTILITY SENSORS**
These are able to detect aggressive attitudes in all life forms. The Dalek is aware of even a thought of hostility toward it.

**CRYOGEN SURVIVAL UNIT**
Under certain conditions the Dalek is able to induce a state of inanimation by 'deep-freezing' and thus preserving itself in perfect condition.

**AUTO-DESTRUCT**
If capture cannot be avoided, or the computors assess the situation as hopeless, the auto-destruct circuits cut in. The Dalek remains dangerous even at this stage as it becomes a gigantic bomb.

**MOTIVE UNIT**
This allows the Dalek to travel at great speeds and to move with total mobility




DOCTOR
WHO
AND THE
Genesis
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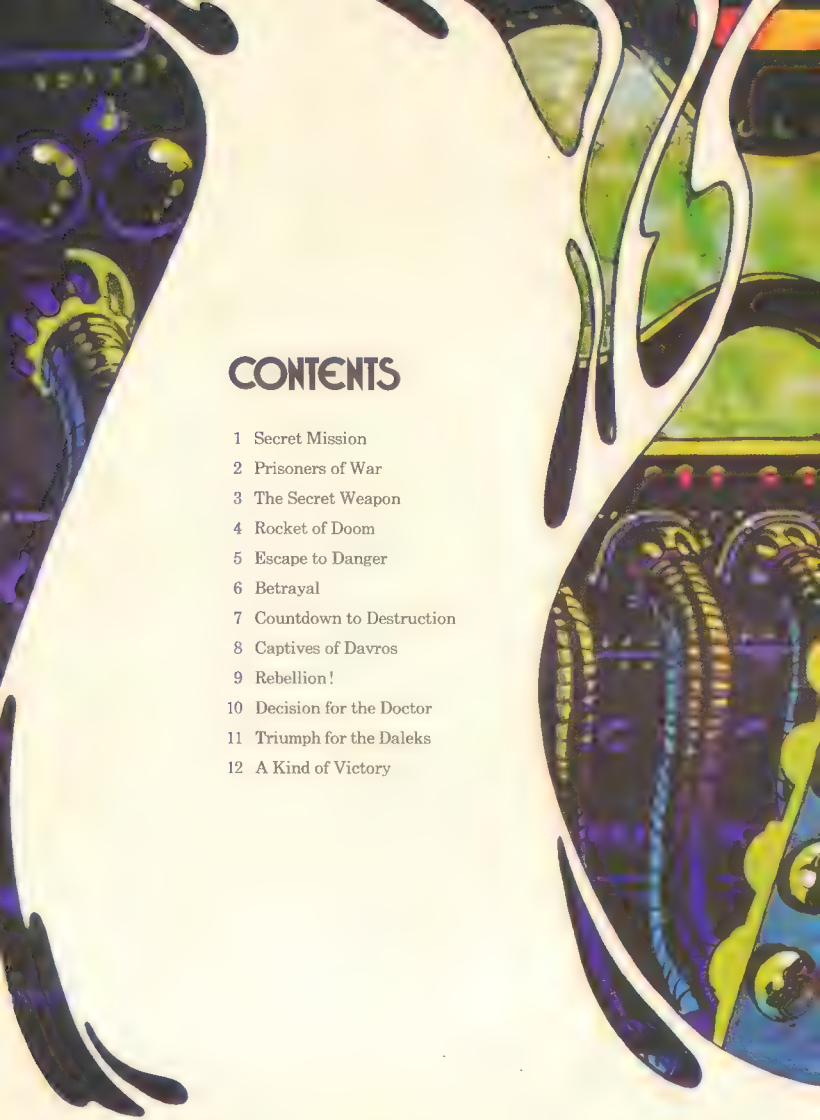
DALEKS



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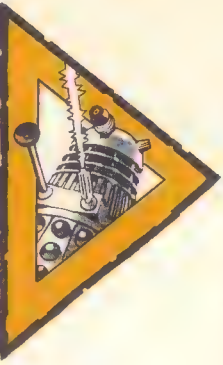
11 Triumph for the Daleks
12 A Kind of Victory

Davros, the evil genius, created the Daleks.



# 1 Secret Mission

It was a battlefield.

The ground was churned, scarred, ravaged. Nothing grew there, nothing lived. The twisted, rusting wrecks of innumerable war-machines littered the landscape. There were strands of ragged, tangled wire, collapsed dugouts, caved-in trenches. The perpetual twilight was made darker by fog. Thick, dank and evil, it swirled close to the muddy ground, hiding some of the horrors from view.

Something stirred in the mud. A goggled, helmeted head peered over a ridge, surveyed the shattered landscape. A hand beckoned, and more shapes rose and shambled forwards. There were about a dozen of them, battle-weary men in ragged uniforms, their weapons a strange mixture of old and new, their faces hidden by gas-masks. A star shell burst over their heads, bathing them for a moment in its sickly green light before it sputtered into darkness. The thump of artillery came from somewhere in the distance, with the hysterical chatter of automatic weapons. But the firing was some distance away. Too tired even to react, the patrol shambled on its way.

A man materialised out of the fog and stood looking in bewilderment after the soldiers. He was a very tall man, dressed in comfortable old tweed trousers and a loosely-hanging jacket. An amazingly long scarf was wound round his neck, a battered, broad-rimmed hat was jammed on to a tangle of curly brown hair. Hands deep in his pockets, he pivoted slowly on his heels, turning in a complete circle to survey the desolate landscape.

He shook his head, the bright blue eyes clouded with puzzlement. This was all wrong, he thought. It was all terribly wrong. The transmat beam should have taken him back to the space station. Instead he was here, in this terrible place. How could it possibly have happened?

'Greetings, Doctor.'

The Doctor spun round at the sound of the voice behind him. A tall, distinguished figure in flowing robes stood looking at him quizzically. A Time Lord! The Doctor knew all about Time Lords – he was one himself. He had left his own people untold years ago to roam through Space and Time in his 'borrowed' TARDIS. He'd rebelled against the Time Lords, been captured and exiled by them, and had at last made his peace with them. He had served them often, sometimes willingly, sometimes not. These days their hold on him was tenuous. But it was still a hold, a limitation of his freedom, and the Doctor never failed to resent it.

He glared at the elegant figure before him. 'So! I've been hijacked!' he said indignantly.

He controlled himself with a mighty effort. 'Whatever I may have done, whatever crimes I committed in your eyes, I have made ample restitution. I have done you great services, and I was given my freedom as a reward. I will not tolerate this continual interference in my lives!'

The Time Lord looked thoughtfully at him and began to stroll across the battlefield, with the air of someone taking a turn on the lawn at a garden party. The dull rumble of gunfire came from somewhere in the distance. '*Continual* interference, Doctor? We pride ourselves we seldom intervene in the affairs of others.'

'Except mine,' the Doctor said bitterly. He hurried after the Time Lord.

'Ah, but you are an exception, Doctor – a special case. You enjoy the freedom we allow you. Occasionally, *not* continually, we ask you to do something for us.'

The Doctor came to a halt, his arms folded. 'I won't do it,' he said obstinately. 'Whatever you want I won't do it!'

The Time Lord spoke one word. 'Daleks.'

The Doctor spun round. 'Daleks? Well, what about them?'

The Time Lord paused, as if collecting his arguments, then said, 'Our latest temporal projections foresee a time-stream in which the Daleks will have destroyed all other life-forms. They could become the dominant creatures in the Universe.'

'That has always been their aim,' agreed the Doctor grimly. 'Go on.'

'We'd like you to return to Skaro at a point in time just *before* the Daleks evolved.'

Immediately the Doctor guessed the Time Lord's plan. 'And prevent their creation?'

'That, or alter their genetic development, so they evolve into less aggressive creatures. At the very least, you might discover some weakness which could serve as a weapon against them.'

The Doctor tried to look as if he was thinking it over. But it was no more than a pretence. He couldn't resist the idea of a chance to defeat his oldest enemies once and for all. 'Oh all right. All right. I suppose I'll have to help you – just one more time. Return me to the TARDIS.'

'No need for that, Doctor. This is Skaro.' The Time Lord gestured at the desolate scene around them. 'Skaro after a thousand years of war between Kaleds and Thals. We thought it would save time if we assumed your agreement.' He tossed something to the Doctor, who caught it instinctively. He found himself holding a heavy, ornately-designed bangle in a metal that looked something like copper. It wasn't copper, of course, any more than the object was the simple ornament it appeared to be. 'A Time Ring, Doctor. It will return you to the TARDIS when your mission is finished. Don't lose it will you? It's your life-line. Good luck.' The Time Lord vanished as suddenly and silently as he had appeared.

'Just a minute,' yelled the Doctor. 'What about my two human companions?'

As if in answer a voice called from the fog. 'Doctor? Where are you?'

'Sarah?' The Doctor began running towards the sound. Almost immediately he lost his balance and skidded down a long muddy slope. Sarah Jane Smith and Harry Sullivan were waiting for him at the edge of a big shell crater.

Sarah was a slim, pretty girl in fashionable clothes. On Earth she was a journalist, though that life seemed very far away now. Harry was a square-jawed, blue-eyed, curly-haired young man. He had the rather dated good looks of the hero of an old-fashioned adventure story. Harry was a Naval man, a doctor. He was attached to UNIT, the Security Organisation to which the Doctor was Scientific Adviser. Harry had made the mistake of doubting the power of the TARDIS. This amazing device, in appearance an old-fashioned police box, was in fact the machine in which the Doctor travelled through Time and Space. Harry had rashly accepted the Doctor's challenge to 'come for a little trip'. Now, after a number of terrifying adventures, he often wondered if he would ever see Earth again.

'All right, Doctor, where are we?' said Sarah. 'This isn't the beacon.' They were supposed to be returning by transmat beam to the space station, where the TARDIS was waiting to carry them home.

The Doctor looked at her apologetically. 'I'm afraid there's been a slight change of plan . . .'

There was a sudden whistling sound. The Doctor wrapped his arms around

his two friends and threw himself into the crater, dragging them with him. They raised their heads to protest - then lowered them hurriedly as heavy-artillery shells roared overhead. One thudded into the rim of the crater, showering them with mud.

The barrage went on for an appallingly long time, but at last it died away. The Doctor lifted his head and looked cautiously out of the crater. '*Not* what you'd call a very friendly welcome.'

He turned at a muffled scream from Sarah. She pointed shakily. They were not alone in the crater. A raggedly-uniformed soldier crouched on the other side, his rifle aimed straight at them. Nobody moved. Then the Doctor walked cautiously towards the soldier. The man didn't react. The Doctor touched him on the shoulder and the soldier pitched forward, landing face-down in the mud.

The Doctor knelt beside him. 'It's all right, Sarah, the poor fellow's dead.' The Doctor examined the body, noticing the strangely shaped gas-mask, the holstered hand-blaster, the ancient projectile rifle. He pointed out the last two items to Harry. 'You see? These two weapons are separated by centuries of technology.'

Sarah joined them. She pointed to a small dial sewn into the ragged combat-jacket. 'What's this thing, Doctor?'

'A radiation detector.'

'Worn with a gas-mask straight out of the First World War?' asked Harry incredulously.

Sarah examined the uniform more closely. 'That combat-jacket's some synthetic fibre - and the rest of the uniform seems to be made of animal skins!'

The Doctor nodded. 'It's like finding the remains of a stone-age man with a transistor radio.'

Harry chuckled. 'Playing rock music, eh?' Even in the most macabre circumstances, Harry could not resist a joke. He looked at the others, hurt at their lack of reaction. '*Rock* music - cave-man - get it?'

Sarah threw him an impatient look and said, 'What does it all mean, Doctor?'

'A thousand-year war,' the Doctor said sadly. 'A once highly-developed civilisation on the point of total collapse. Come along, you two.'

He jumped out of the crater. Sarah scrambled after him. 'Where are we going?'

'Forward, of course.'

The Doctor set off at a great pace, Sarah and Harry following. They were picking their way through a very nasty clump of barbed wire when the Doctor stopped. His keen eyes had seen a sinister shape, half-buried in the mud.

'What is it?' asked Sarah.

Apologetically the Doctor said, 'I'm afraid we seem to be in the middle of a mine-field. Keep close behind, and follow in my footsteps.'

'You sound just like good King Wenceslas.'

The nightmare journey continued. Fog swirled around them, gunfire rumbled in the distance, and their feet squelched through clammy, clinging mud. In between studying the ground beneath his feet, the Doctor swept occasional glances about the desolate landscape.

'What is it, Doctor? Have you seen something?' asked Harry.

'I'm not sure. I keep getting the feeling we're being watched.'

'Me too,' said Sarah. 'Ever since we set off . . .'

'Rubbish,' said Harry vigorously. 'There's nothing out there except mud and fog.'

'Then let's hope it's just my over-active imagination.' Still looking around

him, the Doctor took another step forward. Suddenly he stopped. Beneath the mud, his foot was jammed against something round and metallic. Silently the Doctor pointed downwards. Harry and Sarah looked.

All three held their breath. Slowly the Doctor started to withdraw his foot, then stopped at once as he felt the movement of the mire. He spoke in a quiet, conversational voice. 'Harry, this mine seems to be resting on something solid. If I move my foot it will tilt – and that could be enough to detonate it.'

Harry edged cautiously forward and dropped to his knees beside the half-buried mine. He began clearing mud and gravel away from the mine's surface. The Doctor stood motionless, like someone caught in a game of 'Statues'.

'Seems to be a rock underneath,' said Harry slowly.

Sarah spoke in a whisper, as though the very sound of her voice might be enough to explode the mine. 'Can't you wedge it, Harry? Jam something underneath to make it firm?'

Without looking up Harry said, 'That's what I'm trying to do, old girl.' He groped round the surrounding area and picked up a suitably-sized lump of rock. Very slowly, he slipped it between the mine and the rock on which it rested, holding the mine steady with his free hand. 'All right, Doctor, give it a try. Sarah, you back away – and keep to our footsteps.' Sarah obeyed – it was no time to argue.

'You get back as well, Harry,' said the Doctor.

Still crouching at the Doctor's feet, Harry shook his head. 'No. You'll have a better chance if I hold the mine steady while you move.'

'Don't be stupid, Harry.'

'Don't waste time arguing, Doctor. Just move that foot – gently.'

The Doctor moved it. Nothing happened. He watched as Harry Sullivan took first one hand and then the other from the mine. It didn't shift. The Doctor let out a long sigh of relief. 'Thank you, Harry.'

'My pleasure, Doctor,' said Harry Sullivan, a little shakily.

(As they moved clear of the minefield, a huge twisted figure in a shapeless fur hood slipped after them through the fog. The Doctor's and Sarah's instincts had been right. Something was following them across the battlefield. . . .)

The Doctor trudged to the top of a long steep rise. He stopped and pointed. 'Look!'

Harry and Sarah joined him. There in the distance they saw – what? A giant, semi-transparent dome, fog swirling around its base, odd shapes just discernible beneath it.

'A protective dome,' said the Doctor softly. 'Large enough to cover an entire city.'

Harry gazed at it in wonder. 'If these people can build something like that, why are they fighting a war with barbed-wire and land-mines?'

'Why indeed,' replied the Doctor.

Sarah looked at him curiously. 'Doctor, isn't it time we had a few explanations?'

The Doctor sighed. 'Yes, of course it is. I must begin with an apology. . . .' Briefly the Doctor told them how the Time Lords had intervened to prevent their safe return to the TARDIS, and of the vital mission that had been imposed on him. 'I'm only sorry you two were caught up in their high-handed action.'

He seemed so genuinely distressed that Sarah said, 'That's all right, Doctor. Not your fault, is it Harry?'

'Of course not. If these Daleks are as bad as you say, it'll be a pleasure to help scuttle 'em.'

The Doctor grinned, spirits restored by Harry's cheerful confidence.

'So where do we begin?' asked Sarah, sounding a good deal braver than she actually felt.

The Doctor pointed towards the Dome. 'There!' he said. And they started moving towards the distant city.

But *getting* to the City wasn't so easy. It was guarded by an elaborate system of interconnecting trenches, similar to those that had covered Flanders during the First World War. Fortunately the trench network appeared to be completely deserted. The Doctor and his companions were going through a kind of maze, moving, they hoped, ever nearer to the mysterious city.

'Maybe all the troops have been withdrawn,' suggested Harry.

'Or killed,' said the Doctor. 'See here.'

They followed him round a corner and found themselves in a large trench, floored with wooden planks and barricaded with sandbags. It was lined with men, propped up along its edge as if awaiting attack. 'Even the dead have a part to play in this war,' said the Doctor. 'They've been stood here to make the trench look fully manned.'

Sarah shivered as she glanced at the line of dead men, their sightless eyes staring out into the fog. She wandered further along the trench. Set deep into the rear wall was a heavy metal door. 'Look at this,' she called out.

Harry and the Doctor joined her. 'We must be getting near the city,' said the Doctor. 'That's probably the entrance to some kind of service tunnel.'

Harry heaved on the door, but it wouldn't budge.

Suddenly there was a whistling sound, followed by a thud from over the rim of the trench. Cautiously the Doctor looked out. A metal projectile lay half-

buried in the mud. Evil-looking green smoke was welling out of it, and creeping slowly towards the trench.

The Doctor jumped back. 'Look out,' he yelled. 'Poison gas, and it's coming this way!'

## 2 Prisoners of War

The Doctor was already reaching for one of the propped-up bodies. 'Get gas-masks, quickly!' he shouted. Sarah and Harry ran to obey.

It wasn't particularly pleasant grappling with the stiff cold corpses, but things were too desperate for any fastidiousness. All three pulled tight the straps of their gas-masks, just as green smoke began creeping into the trench.

There was a sudden burst of rifle fire. Bullets sprayed the edge of the trench, thudding into the sandbags and whining over their heads.

The Doctor peered out cautiously. A small group of ragged soldiers was pelting towards them, yelling and firing as they came. He turned to shout a warning to Sarah and Harry, but it was already too late. Troops leapt over the sandbags and dropped into the trench. Seeing the gas-masked forms of the Doctor and his companions, they hurled themselves upon them.

They had no chance to explain their neutrality. Within minutes they were engaged in savage hand-to-hand fighting. Luckily the trench was so packed with struggling bodies that the attackers had no chance to use their weapons, not daring to shoot for fear of hitting each other. The Doctor and Harry closed ranks to defend Sarah. They put up a splendid fight. Harry had boxed for the Navy in his time and he dealt out straight rights, lefts and uppercuts in the best traditions of the boxing ring. The Doctor fought in a whirl of long arms and legs, using the techniques of Venusian Aikido to drop one opponent after another. But so heavily were the two outnumbered that the sheer weight of bodies soon bore them down.

Crouched in one corner of the trench, Sarah heard a grinding noise. Peering through the struggling mass of bodies, she saw the heavy metal door slide open. A fresh contingent of soldiers appeared. They were better uniformed than the first attackers, and better armed too. There was a sudden fierce chattering of automatic weapons. Sarah jumped up to warn the Doctor, but a wild swing from a rifle-butt caught her on the temple. She collapsed face downwards.

The Doctor heard the chatter of machine-guns and realised that the character of the battle had changed. These new arrivals had no hesitation in shooting. 'Down Harry!' he yelled, and flung himself to the ground. As the two dropped down, heavy shapes began falling on top of them – the now bullet-ridden corpses of their first attackers.

Shielded by the bodies of their former opponents the Doctor and Harry laid low.

The rattle of machine-gun fire ended at last. The leader of the victorious soldiers saw that the green gas had drifted away. He pulled the gas-mask from his face and took in great gulps of the foggy air. He was very young. As the others pulled off their gas-masks it could be seen that they too were little more than boys.

Pushing aside the dead body which held him down, Harry began struggling to his feet. Instantly the nearest soldier raised his gun. The Doctor struggled up, shouting, 'No. . . .'

Then came the sound of more shooting from outside the trench, the yelling of a fresh wave of attackers. The leader indicated the Doctor and Harry. 'Into

the tunnel with them – quick!' Harry and the Doctor were clubbed down and dragged unconscious through the metal door. The leader followed his men, and the door clanged shut behind them.

Outside the trench the sounds of yelling and shooting faded as the attack moved on to another section of the line. Hidden beneath a pile of bodies, Sarah lay unconscious, a trickle of blood running from her temple.

Harry and the Doctor were carried along a dark tunnel, into a small, concrete-walled room at its far end. The place was primitively furnished with wooden tables, benches and a couple of bunks. One of the tables held some kind of field communications equipment. On the far side of the room was an arched opening in which stood a small passenger trolley. The trolley was on rails which disappeared into the blackness of the tunnel.

Looking at his two prisoners with a satisfied air, the young patrol leader wrenched the gas-masks from their faces. His expression changed to one of puzzlement. 'They don't *look* like Thals. . . .' He thought for a moment. 'Stick them in the transporter, I'll take them to Command Headquarters.'

Harry and the Doctor recovered to find themselves rattling through pitch darkness at terrifying speed. The trolley shot into a big, well-lighted area and jolted to a halt Armed guards swarmed round and dragged them along more concrete corridors and into a large room.

By now the Doctor had recovered enough to take an interest in his surroundings. They were in some kind of central command post. Maps covered the walls, there was more communications equipment, and in the centre of the room was a huge map table holding a relief map, a kind of model landscape. It seemed to depict *two* dome-covered cities, with the trench-riddled battle-field between them. A fitting image for the present state of Skaro, thought the Doctor. He noticed that the guards were smartly uniformed here, their weapons modern and well cared for.

A tall, very young officer, elegant in his gold-braided uniform, was shifting symbols on the relief map. He straightened up and looked coldly at the patrol leader. 'Well?'

'Two prisoners, General Ravon. Captured in section one-zero-one. For interrogation.'

The officer smiled. 'Excellent. I enjoy interrogations.'

The Doctor looked at him. The young face was hard and cold. 'Yes,' he said cheerfully, 'I must say, you look the type.'

A blow from the rifle-butt of one of the guards sent the Doctor staggering. 'Insolent muto,' said Ravon He turned to the patrol leader who stood rigidly to attention, obviously waiting to speak. 'Well, what is it?'

'My section totally destroyed the Thal attackers, sir, except for these two prisoners. But well, the men are exhausted, and ammunition is running low.'

'Your men will fight until they are relieved. As for ammunition, conserve it. Use the spears and knives you were issued with whenever possible. Return to your Patrol.'

'Sir.' The patrol leader saluted wearily and marched out, taking the guards with him. The Doctor glanced quickly round the room. Except for the soldier manning the communications unit, they were now alone with the General. . . .

As if guessing the Doctor's thoughts, Ravon drew his blaster and covered the two prisoners. 'So the Thals have degenerated to recruiting mutos, have they? Turn out your pockets!'

The Doctor shrugged. 'Why not? I always try to turn them out every year or so.' He began piling up an incredible assortment of junk on the edge of the map table a yo-yo, a bag of jelly babies, several lengths of string and a miscellaneous collection of scientific instruments. As he did so, he took the

opportunity to study the relief map.

Ravon noticed the Doctor's interest.

'Take a good look,' he sneered. 'In a few weeks we're going to change the shape of that map for ever. We shall sweep the Thals from the face of Skaro!' A note of hysteria was in his voice.

The Doctor studied him thoughtfully. Basic insecurity there – or why would he bother to boast to a couple of prisoners. In tones of deliberate provocation the Doctor said, 'Oh yes? And how are you going to do that with worn-out soldiers, no ammunition and boy generals?'

Ravon felt he had to convince this infuriating prisoner. 'When victory is ours, we shall wipe every trace of the Thals and their city from this planet. We will avenge the deaths of all the Kaleds who have fallen. Our battlecry will be, "Total extermination of the Thals".' Ravon's voice had risen to a ritual chant. He was repeating a lesson drummed into him since childhood Deliberately the Doctor made his own voice low and soothing.

'That's very impressive, General. You mean you're going to *sweep* across these trenches. . . .' The Doctor suited his actions to his words, flinging one arm out in a sweeping gesture. At the end of it, the edge of his hand hit Ravon's wrist in a precisely timed blow. Ravon's hand opened, the blaster flew through the air. Harry Sullivan caught it with the skill of a born cricketer. The Doctor turned to Ravon, who was rubbing his hand. 'Did I hurt your fingers, old chap?'

The soldier at the communications set turned round to find Harry covering him with the blaster.

'You won't get out of here alive,' Ravon blustered feebly. The Doctor ignored him. He crossed to the communications set, took the blaster from the startled soldier and put the set out of action with a few well-aimed blows. Outraged, the soldier jumped him and the Doctor silenced him with a swift tap from the blaster. He lowered him gently to the floor with genuine regret.

The Doctor's expression hardened as he swung back to Ravon. 'Now then, Alexander the Great, you're going to take us out of here.'

Ravon struck a heroic attitude. 'Never!'

Harry jammed the blaster under his chin. 'You won't get any medals for being stupid, General. In fact you won't get any more medals for anything ever.'

Ravon looked from the Doctor to Harry. These two ruffians were obviously desperate men. Surely his own life was too valuable to risk? It wasn't as if they stood any real chance of escaping. . . .

'All right. Where do you want me to take you?'

'Back to where we were captured,' said the Doctor. 'We left a friend behind.'

'In the Wastelands?' said Ravon. 'Yes, I suppose that's home to you mutos isn't it? Well, come on. I can promise you won't get far.'

The Doctor and Harry fell into step beside Ravon, the stolen blasters concealed in their pockets. Ravon led them out of the room and along the corridor.

They followed him along one corridor after another, twisting and turning until Harry at least had lost all sense of direction. He gave Ravon a jab. 'Where are you taking us? This isn't the way we came.'

'There's a platform lift at the end of this tunnel. You know what a lift is, don't you, muto?'

'Yes, but I don't know what a muto is,' said Harry. 'You're making a mistake, General.'

'If you come from the Wastelands, you're mutos!' Clearly that settled the matter for Ravon, and Harry didn't bother to argue. The lift appeared at the

end of the corridor. Ravon touched a control beside it, and they all stood waiting.

Harry gave the Doctor a worried look. 'I hope Sarah's still there.'

Ravon couldn't resist the opportunity to sneer.

'If you're *not* mutos, then you won't last long up there.'

There came the sound of jackbooted feet on the concrete floor. Someone was walking along the corridor towards them. Harry gave Ravon a warning jab with the hidden blaster in his pocket. 'Just remember we're your friends, won't you?'

The newcomer was a slightly built, thin-faced man. His black uniform was plain except for silver insignia, and seemed somehow different from Ravon's. Not a soldier, thought the Doctor, but some kind of policeman. Ravon's greeting confirmed the Doctor's theory. 'Greetings, Security-Commander Nyder.'

Nyder's reply was equally formal. 'Greetings, General Ravon. I was just on my way to see you.' He stared curiously at the oddly assorted trio. The Doctor beamed, and Harry managed a curt nod. Nasty-looking customer, he thought.

Ravon coughed nervously. 'Perhaps you would be kind enough to go to my office and wait. I shall only be a few minutes longer.'

Nyder nodded, but made no attempt to move on. He looked more closely at the Doctor and Harry. 'You're civilians?'

The Doctor nodded. 'Just here on a brief visit to our old friend General Ravon. Don't let us detain you.'

'You won't.' As if satisfied with this riposte, Nyder started to walk away. Then suddenly he jumped back, drawing a pistol. 'Ravon – get down!' he shouted.

Ravon flung himself to the ground as Nyder fired at the Doctor. The bullet sang past his head, chipping concrete fragments from the wall. The Doctor yelled, 'Run for it, Harry,' and the two fugitives disappeared round the corner.

Nyder produced a pocket communicator. 'Alert all guards. Two Thal intruders in command complex. Sound the alarm.'

The Doctor and Harry sprinted along a corridor with no idea where they were going. Their one thought was to escape the pursuing guards. Unfortunately more guards appeared ahead, and only a providential side-corridor saved them from capture. Shots ringing all round them they turned left, then right, ran down an even smaller corridor and found themselves in a dead end. The corridor ended in a pair of lift doors like the ones where they'd left Ravon and Nyder. They turned to go back, but heard guards running towards them. Instinctively the Doctor pressed the lift controls. The running feet came nearer. As guards appeared in the corridor the lift doors opened and Harry and the Doctor dived inside. The soldiers raised their guns, the Doctor stabbed frantically at the controls, and the lift doors closed – just in time to save Harry and the Doctor from a hail of bullets.

Nyder arrived to see what had happened. He snatched out his communicator. 'Alert surface patrols to watch for intruders in lift area seven!'

The high-speed lift whisked Harry and the Doctor to the surface in a matter of seconds. The doors opened on a featureless stretch of open country – Wasteland as Ravon had called it. As yet no soldiers were in sight. Harry stared out into the drifting fog. 'Where to, Doctor?'

Figures loomed out of the fog, then came the sound of shouted orders. 'Just keep running,' called the Doctor, and shot off across the battlefield like an ostrich, Harry close behind. The Kaled patrol lumbered after them.

The Doctor and Harry tore across the churned-up landscape leaping over pill-boxes, dodging barbed-wire, stumbling in and out of shell holes. In their

frantic burst of speed they left the patrol far behind. It began to look as if they had succeeded in making their escape. But the battlefield held more dangers than pursuing soldiers. Stumbling down a muddy slope the Doctor's foot caught some kind of buried trip-wire. He gave Harry a tremendous shove, yelling 'Mine!' and threw himself in the mud beside him. There was a muffled 'crump', and a fountain of mud shot up in the air as the long-buried mine was detonated. Harry and the Doctor escaped the flying shrapnel but they were close enough to be deafened and half-stunned by the blast.

Dizzily they stumbled to their feet, shaking their heads to clear the ringing in their ears. The Doctor rubbed the mud from his eyes and glanced round.

They were completely surrounded by the Kaled patrol, covered by a ring of rifles. The Doctor looked round at the circle of hostile faces. Slowly he raised his hands. Now what was it they said on Earth, back in the Kaiser's day?

The Doctor smiled round at the soldiers. 'Kamerade?' he said hopefully. No one smiled back. The soldiers began to close in.

## 3 The Secret Weapon

The Doctor and Harry were marched across the Wastelands, into the lift, through the corridors of the Command Centre and back into the room they had just left. Security-Commander Nyder and General Ravon were waiting for them. Nyder was turning over the odds and ends taken from the Doctor's pockets. He held up a small, complex instrument surmounted with a dial. 'What is the function of this object?'

The Doctor leaned forward and examined it. 'Very interesting little gadget,

that,' he said chattily. 'Actually it's an etheric beam locator but you *can* use it for detecting ion-charged emissions.'

Clearly Nyder was none the wiser. 'It is not of Thal manufacture.'

'Well, of course not. My friend and I don't come from your planet.'

Nyder turned the instrument over in his hands. 'I have heard Davros say there is no intelligent life on other planets. And Davros is never wrong – about anything.'

'Then he must be an exceptional man. Even I am occasionally wrong about *some* things. Who is Davros?'

Nyder looked at the Doctor keenly, then realised that the question was genuine. 'Davros is our greatest scientist. He is in charge of all scientific research in this Bunker.'

Ravon, who had been standing by in the background, made an attempt to assert himself. 'They *could* be mutos, Commander Nyder. Mutos who've managed to develop some kind of technology. . . .'

Nyder gave him a look of silent contempt, but said nothing. Harry, equally silent up to now, burst out, 'Look here, I wish you wouldn't keep calling us mutos or Thals. We don't even know what they are.'

Nyder looked wonderingly at him. 'Mutos are scarred and twisted monsters created by the chemical and radiation weapons used in the early part of this war. They were banished to the Wastelands, where they scavenge like the animals they have become.'

'In other words, you just abandon your genetic wounded?' There was horror in the Doctor's voice.

'The Kaled race *must* be kept pure. The imperfect are rejected, sent into the Wastelands. Some of them survive.'

'That's a very harsh policy.'

Nyder shifted uncomfortably. 'Your views are unimportant,' he said dismissively. 'General Ravon – I am taking these two prisoners for interrogation by the Special Unit.'

'But they are prisoners of the Army. . . .'

'You will release them to me. The Special Unit will get more out of them than your crude methods.'

Ravon crumpled before the cold authority in Nyder's voice. 'If you insist. . . .'

'I do insist.' Nyder produced a sheaf of papers from inside his tunic. 'I have a list of supply requirements here. All these items are to be delivered to the Bunker immediately.'

Ravon scanned the list with growing resentment. 'I simply cannot spare this amount of equipment. Your spare-parts requisition alone would take over half my available supply.'

Nyder smiled coldly. 'General Ravon, you will notice that the requisitions are counter-signed by Davros himself. Perhaps you would prefer to discuss the matter with him?'

Ravon shuddered, and shook his head. 'I'll have the supplies at the Bunker by dawn.'

'By midnight, General. The orders specify midnight.'

'Very well. Midnight.'

Nyder turned to the guards. 'Bring the prisoners.'

As they were marched away after him, the Doctor thought that it had been a very interesting demonstration: It was clear that the real power among the Kaleds lay not with the army, but with Davros, and those who served him.

Sarah had one of the most horrifying awakenings of her life. Buried beneath a

pile of rapidly stiffening corpses, she could feel her face wet with blood. At first she felt confusedly that she must be dead too, or at least badly wounded. But as she struggled groggily to her feet she realised that the blood came from a shallow cut on her forehead. Miraculously, she was more or less unharmed.

She looked around. Along the line of the trench lay still more bodies, sprawled in the grotesque and ungainly attitudes of sudden death. The metal door was closed. There was no sign of the Doctor or Harry. Sarah began to move along the trench calling softly, 'Doctor? Doctor, are you there? Harry?' There was no answer. She paused, thinking. It would do her no good to stay here. She started to climb out of the trench.

Sarah wandered across the Wastelands for what seemed a very long time, with no clear idea of where she was going or why. The grey half-light, combined with the drifting fog, made visibility very low. She stumbled in and out of shell holes, and disentangled herself from clumps of rusting barbed wire. Occasionally she heard distant gunfire, but saw no soldiers. Clearly the battle had moved away from this section of the line. All the time she had a feeling of something following her, of unseen forms creeping towards her. It was this, as much as any real hope of finding the Doctor, that kept her staggering wearily on her way.

As the darkness deepened, the following shapes moved closer. Sarah told herself it was all imagination, but she knew very well it was not. At last she paused exhausted, and a hideous shapeless *something* loomed out of the darkness, reaching for her. Sarah screamed and ran. The shapeless thing pursued her and soon others joined in the chase. She was hunted across the Wastelands, soft footsteps thudding behind her. Fear gave her fresh energy and she ran blindly at full speed, taking no care where she was going. Suddenly the ground vanished beneath her feet . She felt herself falling. It wasn't a long fall, something like five or six feet, and luckily she landed on soft ground. But it was enough to knock the breath out of her. She lay gasping, pressed close to the ground, and to her relief heard the sounds of pursuit pass by.

Scrambling to her feet, Sarah began to take a look at her surroundings. Close by she could just distinguish the outline of a broken wall. She moved towards it and felt her way along. It seemed she had fallen into the basement of a ruined house. She decided she might as well stay. At least the ruins offered a chance of rest and safety. She made her way out of the basement, climbing some broken steps. As she reached the top, Sarah suddenly drew back. She was in a ruined entrance hall. She could see the sky through the broken roof. Light was streaming from a room on the other side of the hall. Sarah crept up cautiously, feeling that she was more likely to meet enemies than friends on this dreadful planet.

Flattening herself against the wall, she peeped into the room. It was a large room, and might once have been some kind of conference chamber. A space had been cleared in the centre of the rubble-littered floor, and a portable field-lamp made a central pool of light. On the far edge of the cleared area, a man was setting up a target, a life-sized, wooden cut-out in the shape of a soldier. The man wore the white coat of a scientist. He was tall and thin, and his features had a dark, thin-faced intense look, so typical of most Kinds.

There was another man in the room, but Sarah was unable to see him clearly. He was on the near side of the pool of light, his back to her, and was almost hidden by shadows. All Sarah could see was the back of an elaborate wheel-chair. A withered right hand hovered constantly over the controls built into the chair arm.

The man finished setting up the target. 'I am ready, Davros.' He walked over

to stand beside the man in the chair, his back to Sarah.

'Observe the test closely, Gharman, my friend. This will be a moment to live in history.' The voice was almost inhuman, filtered through some mechanical reproduction system. It had a harsh, grating quality that Sarah found familiar. She saw the claw-like hand touch a switch. There was a whirring sound from the outer darkness and something moved into the pool of light. It was a gleaming metal creature with a rounded base. The body was constructed of heavily-studded metal panels, the top was a dome from which projected a lens on a metal stalk. Sarah recognised the creature at once. It was a Dalek.

True, it wasn't a fully-evolved Dalek, the kind she had seen in ruthless action on the planet of the Exxilons. The movements were jerky and the arm with the curious sucker-like tip was missing. But the gun was there, and the eye-stalk.... This must be an early model, a kind of prototype. Sarah realised that the calculations of the Time Lords had been accurate The Doctor and his friends had been brought to Skaro as the Daleks were about to be born.

Davros was putting the Dalek through its paces. 'Left, left, forward... Now right. Stop.' The Dalek obeyed, its movements faltering and uncertain. Sarah realised now why the voice of Davros had sounded so familiar. It was just like that of the Dalek he had created!

At last Davros was satisfied with the Dalek's position. It stood in front of his chair, opposite the target on the other side of the room. 'Now,' grated Davros. 'EXTERMINATE!'

The Dalek's gun roared, and the target exploded in flames.

'Excellent,' said Davros. 'Locomotion is still faulty, and we must improve the sense-organs. But the weaponry is perfect. We can begin!'

As Davros' chair swivelled round Sarah jumped back into hiding. Crouched low she saw the shape in the chair glide past her, followed by the Dalek. Gharman came last, carrying the field-lamp. Sarah watched the bobbing light move away across the Wastelands.

She leant against the wall, thinking hard. Obviously she had stumbled on some kind of secret test, and she ought to get the information to the Doctor. But where to look for him? Presumably in the City. Sarah decided to follow Davros. As she started to get up, a huge, misshapen hand reached out of the darkness and touched her lightly on the shoulder. Sarah turned to see the black bulk of a hooded creature looming over her. The shock was too much, and she fainted dead away.

To their surprise, the Doctor and Harry were marched out of the doomed city and across several miles of Wasteland. Soon they saw lights ahead, and the shape of a small, low-lying building, a kind of blockhouse. Nyder halted the party by a massive metal door. A voice spoke from a metal grille. 'You will announce your name, rank, serial number, purpose of visit and authorisation reference.'

Nyder glared irritably into what the Doctor guessed must be a hidden camera. 'All right, Tane, use your eyes. This is Security-Commander Nyder with prisoners and escort.'

'Yes, sir,' squawked the voice in evident alarm. Nyder was obviously a character to be feared. The heavy door slid open and they marched through.

They found themselves in a largish ante-room. One wall was filled with complex scientific equipment, and another metal door faced them. Two black-clad officers stood waiting stiffly to attention, one beside the door, the other at a kind of control console. More black-clad guards lined the walls.

Nyder nodded to the first officer. 'Captain Tane, I want these two screened

and passed to Ronson. Full interrogation. Here are their belongings.' Handing over a sealed plastic envelope, Nyder turned. The second officer hurriedly touched a control. The inner door opened, revealing a tunnel stretching downwards. Nyder disappeared along it, and the door closed after him. The Doctor gave Harry a reassuring grin. Any situation that started with Nyder leaving couldn't be all bad! He nodded affably to Tane.

'That's a relief. Any chance of a cup of tea?' Tane glared at him speechlessly. 'Any light refreshment would do,' the Doctor added helpfully. 'We've been through some very trying experiences, haven't we, Harry?'

'Very trying, Doctor.' Harry's agreement was heartfelt.

Tane pointed to a sort of upright coffin surrounded with complex instruments. 'Step into the security scan.'

The Doctor glanced at Harry. 'No tea,' he said sadly.

Tane's voice was coldly angry. 'Let me point out to you that you have no rights here. I have full authority to execute any prisoner who does not obey orders.'

Two soldiers seized Harry and shoved him into the scanning device. As soon as he was inside a powerful light shone from above, seeming to pin him down. Harry went rigid, white lights flashed and instruments buzzed all round him.

The lights went out, and Harry staggered out of the machine on the point of collapse. A soldier grabbed him, propped him against the nearest wall, then pushed the Doctor into the machine. Once again the light flashed and the instruments buzzed. But this time there was a new noise; a high-pitched, warning shriek. Tane glanced at the instrument panel. 'Scan detects power-source on prisoner's left wrist.' The scan was concluded, the machine switched off and the Doctor stepped out. At a nod from Tane two guards grabbed him. 'Remove object on the left wrist of the prisoner.' One of the guards started to wrench away the bangle that was the only hope of returning to the TARDIS.

The Doctor struggled wildly. 'You can't have that. It isn't a weapon, and it's of no possible interest to you. . . .'

A brutal blow from the rifle-butt of one of the guards choked off his protest. Tane took the bracelet, then dropped it into the plastic envelope with the Doctor's other odds and ends. The officer in charge of the scanner gave Tane a sheaf of cards, and he put them in the envelope without looking at them.

As he caught hold of the collapsing Doctor, Harry hissed in his ear, 'Stop making a fuss, Doctor.'

'That Time Bracelet is our only hope of getting back to the TARDIS. We've *got* to get it back.'

'I know that,' whispered Harry. 'But we don't want *them* to know, do we?' The Doctor subsided.

Tane turned to the nearest guard. 'These prisoners are to be given over to the custody of Senior Researcher Ronson. Take this with you.' He handed over the plastic envelope.

The two prisoners were taken through the inner door and down the long tunnel. They were led along endless buttressed corridors and into an enormous underground room. Looking around in interest, the Doctor guessed he was in an advanced research laboratory. Or rather a collection of laboratories. The place was sectioned off and in different cubicles and enclosed areas white-coated scientists were hard at work. They were taken across the room to a corner desk, where a haggard, grey-haired man sat wearily studying some figures. The guards handed over the envelope and the prisoners, and marched away.

Harry and the Doctor stood waiting before the desk. The grey-haired man tipped out the contents of the envelope and examined them. The Doctor's eyes gleamed at the sight of the Time Bracelet and he took a pace forwards, but Harry nudged him, looking round significantly. The huge room had many doors, but armed guards stood at every one.

The man behind the desk looked up. 'My name is Ronson,' he said. 'Do sit down.' Harry and the Doctor, taken aback by the first kind words they'd heard on Skaro, pulled over a couple of metal chairs and sank into them gratefully.

'Thank you. I take it you're not with the military?' the Doctor asked hopefully.

'I am a member of the Special Scientific Division.'

'Excellent. Perhaps we can have a conversation that isn't punctuated by rifle-butts.' The Doctor rubbed his aching back.

A little shamefacedly Ronson said, 'That depends. If you don't answer my questions satisfactorily, I must hand you back to the Security Guards.' As if glad to leave a distasteful subject, he turned to the objects on his desk. 'Where did you get these things?'

The Doctor smiled. 'Oh, here and there. Different places, different times.'

'If I didn't know better,' said Ronson slowly, 'I would swear they were produced on some other planet. But it's an established scientific fact that Skaro is the only planet capable of supporting life.'

'Suppose there are more planets than you're aware of?' suggested the Doctor gently.

Ronson picked up the batch of coded cards. 'When you went through the scanner the instruments checked your physical make-up – encaphalographical patterns, physiological composition and so on. So if you are from another world. . . .' His voice faded away as he studied the cards.

'You were saying?' asked the Doctor politely.

Ronson looked up with awe in his eyes. '*His* make-up,' he nodded towards Harry, 'is comparable to ours, with a few minor differences. But yours. . . . Nothing conforms to any known life-form on this planet. *Nothing* – except the external appearance.'

'Just goes to show – you should never judge by appearances.'

Ronson leaned forward. 'Who are you? Where do you come from? Tell me.' The Doctor recognised pure scientific curiosity in Ronson's voice.

'It's a very long story. Do you have any knowledge of the Theory of Space Dimension Co-related to Relative Time?'

The Doctor was interrupted by a low gonging sound. Every single scientist, Ronson included, reacted with eager attention. The sound stopped and a voice said, 'Davros will address the Elite Scientific Corps in the main laboratory assembly.' Almost at once more white-coated scientists began to enter the room, workers from the adjoining laboratories.

'Our session will have to wait,' Ronson said. 'Davros is coming.' His voice was hushed with reverence.

'I gather Davros is your Chief Scientist?'

'Our Chief Scientist and our supreme commander. He must have something of importance to tell us.'

'I shall be interested to meet him,' said the Doctor politely. But even he was not prepared for the strange apparition that glided into the room. The Doctor was seeing, at close range and in clear lighting, the strange being Sarah had only glimpsed during the secret test in the ruined building.

Davros was no more than the shattered, ruined remnant of what had once been a man. He glided along in an advanced form of wheelchair that moved under its own power. The withered husk of a body was swathed in a high-

collared, green plastic overall, and surrounded by a variety of life-support systems. The Doctor guessed that both heart and lungs were mechanically operated and maintained. Only the right hand was visible, a withered claw hovering constantly over the controls built into one arm of the chair. But the most horrifying thing about Davros was his face. Parchment-thin skin clung to the outlines of the shrivelled skull. The eye-sockets were blank and sunken, the mouth a lipless slit. A helmet-like arrangement of wires and plastic tubes surmounted the head, supporting a single lens that rested in the centre of the forehead. Speech, sight and hearing must be mechanically aided too, thought the Doctor.

Harry Sullivan looked at Davros in horror. 'What happened to the poor devil?'

'An atomic shell struck his laboratory during a Thal bombardment,' whispered Ronson. 'His body was shattered, but he *refused* to die. He clung to life, and himself designed the mobile life-support system in which you see him.'

Harry said nothing. To himself he thought that death would surely be preferable to the kind of existence Davros must be leading now.

Davros had taken up his position in the centre of the far wall, flanked by the black-clad figure of Security-Commander Nyder. Davros spoke. 'If I may have your attention....' There was utter and complete silence. Helpless in his chair, Davros should have been pitiful. Instead, he was terrifying. The Doctor could almost feel the burning intelligence, the powerful, inflexible will that radiated from the crippled form. 'For some time,' Davros continued, 'I have been busy on a top secret project. There is still much to be done. However, I am anxious that you should see the remarkable progress made so far, and to that end I have arranged this demonstration.' Davros wheeled his chair to face the door by which he had entered. His withered hand dropped to touch a control, and seconds later a metallic shape glided into the room. Like Sarah before him, the Doctor had no difficulty in recognising a Dalek. Armless, weaponless, but still unmistakably a Dalek.

As the machine glided up to Davros, his metallic voice commanded, 'Halt.' The Dalek stopped.

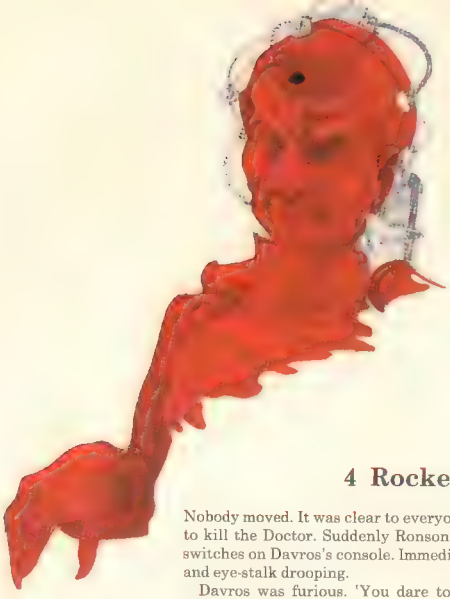
'He's perfected voice control,' breathed Ronson. 'That's magnificent.'

'Move left. Halt. Move forward. Halt. Circle. Halt.' Obedient to Davros's commands the Dalek moved jerkily about the room.

'Nyder!' The Security Commander stepped forward. He took a sucker arm and a gun, and fitted them on to the Dalek. 'As you see,' grated Davros, 'our machine is now fitted with a tactile organ and a means of self-defence. I shall turn the machine over to total self-control. It will then be independent of all outside influence. A living, thinking, self-supporting creature.'

Davros touched a switch. For a moment the Dalek did nothing. Then, slowly and uncertainly, it began to move around the room. Davros followed in his wheelchair. Somehow the two were curiously alike. Suddenly the Dalek seemed to see the Doctor. It moved slowly towards his corner, halting just in front of him. The Doctor stood quite still.

'Alien,' croaked the Dalek suddenly. 'Exterminate ... exterminate ... exterminate!' Slowly the gun stick raised until it was pointing straight at the Doctor.



## 4 Rocket of Doom

Nobody moved. It was clear to everyone in the room that the Dalek intended to kill the Doctor. Suddenly Ronson darted forward and flicked one of the switches on Davros's console. Immediately the Dalek 'switched off', gun arm and eye-stalk drooping.

Davros was furious. 'You dare to interfere! You have the audacity to interrupt my experiment!'

Ronson was clearly terrified but he made himself speak out. 'It was going to destroy him.'

'And you consider his worthless life more important than the progress we have made? My creature showed a natural instinct to destroy everything alien and you interceded.'

'Davros ... I'm sorry,' pleaded Ronson. 'But this is no ordinary prisoner. I believe he has invaluable information. Let me interrogate him first – then your creature can do what it likes with him.'

Davros considered. 'Very well. You will be punished later for your insubordination. Meanwhile you may interrogate your prisoner until the end of this work-period. After that, I shall resume my experiment.'

Davros wheeled and glided away. Ronson heaved a sigh of relief. The Doctor took a deep breath. 'Thank you,' he said simply.

Ronson seemed hardly able to believe his own temerity. 'I was simply doing my duty. Now you must co-operate with me. If you don't provide knowledge to justify what I have done, Davros will resume his experiment as threatened.'

Nyder crossed over to them. 'Take the prisoners to the cells. You can finish the questioning there. Davros wants them kept safely.'

As the guards bustled them away, the Doctor glanced longingly behind him. The Time Ring still lay among the odds and ends on Ronson's desk. ...

Sarah's faint lasted only a few minutes. She awoke furious with herself she'd always believed she was the sort of girl who never fainted. As consciousness returned, she heard low whispering voices. She decided to fake unconscious-

ness a little longer. Two cloaked and hooded figures were crouched beside her, one huge and massive, one thin and spindly. The big one touched her cheek with a misshapen hand. Sarah lay perfectly still. When the figure spoke, its voice was deep and gentle. 'She is beautiful ... no deformities or imperfections.'

The smaller figure had a shrill whining voice. 'She is a norm, Sevrin. All norms are our enemies. Kill her.'

'Why?' asked the deep voice sadly. 'Why must we always destroy beauty, kill another creature because it is different?'

'Kill her,' the other voice insisted. 'It is the law. All norms must die. If you will not kill her, I will.' The creature produced a knife from under its cloak and long, incredibly thin arms snaked out towards Sarah.

Sevrin moved protectively in front of her, grabbing the knife-wrist. For a moment the two creatures struggled. They broke apart as they heard footsteps and muffled voices. 'A patrol,' muttered Sevrin. 'They're sure to check the building.'

The smaller creature squeaked in panic. 'We must get away.'

'No,' said the deep voice authoritatively. 'Keep still. If you move they'll see you.'

But the slighter figure was already on the move, scuttling spider-like along the wall. From the darkness a voice yelled, 'Halt!'

The glare of a spotlight pinned the shuffling figure. 'Don't move,' ordered the voice, and the sound of booted feet came closer. Suddenly the spindly creature made a run for it. A single shot rang out and it dropped to the ground. Two fair-haired Thal soldiers came forward, one carrying a hand-beam, the other an old-fashioned single-shot rifle. The first shone his light on their kill. 'Only a muto. You wasted your ammunition.'

The soldier with the rifle began to reload. His companion swept the torch-beam along the wall. 'Here, there's a couple more of 'em.'

The torch-beam lit up Sevrin crouching over Sarah's body. The soldier with the rifle took aim, but the other stopped him. 'Hold it. Remember orders. They need expendable labour for the rocket loading.' He shone the torch on Sevrin, pulling the mutant to his feet. 'This one's not so bad. Got all it needs to walk and carry.' Sevrin stood meekly, making no attempt to resist. The soldier shone the lamp down on Sarah. 'No reason this one can't work. Looks almost a norm.' He poked her in the ribs with his foot. 'Come on you, up you get.'

Sarah got slowly to her feet. So much had happened since she'd come to that she was still confused. She staggered a little as she stood up. The soldier with the rifle called, 'No good, this one's too weak and slow. Better let me finish it off.' He raised his rifle.

Sevrin stepped in front of Sarah, shielding her. 'She'll be all right, I promise. I'll help her.'

The soldier hesitated, then nodded. 'All right. Then move.' He gestured with the rifle. Sarah stumbled into the darkness, Sevrin supporting her.

She felt better once she was moving, and was soon able to walk unaided. The soldiers herded them across the Wastelands for what seemed a very long way, until at last they came to within sight of a huge dome-covered city. It was very like the one Sarah had seen earlier with the Doctor and Harry, though the design was slightly different. She nudged Sevrin. 'What's that?'

He looked at her in surprise. 'It is the city of the Thals.'

They were taken through a guarded access tunnel, along endless concrete corridors, and herded into a huge, bare cell. Small groups of prisoners like themselves were scattered all over the room. Most were cloaked and hooded like Sevrin – mutos, as the soldiers had called them. But there was also a

sprinkling of raggedly-uniformed, dark-haired Kaled soldiers. Sarah supposed they must be prisoners of war.

Sarah and Sevrin joined the rest of the prisoners, slumping down on the floor, backs against the wall. Sarah looked round and shivered. 'I wonder why they've brought us here?'

'I heard the soldiers say they needed workers for their rocket project. I don't mind working. They may even feed us.'

A nearby prisoner leaned across to them. He was a Kaled soldier, very young with a bleak, bitter face. Although neither of them realised it, he and Sarah had met before. The Kaled had been leader of the patrol which had emerged from the Kaled dome to capture Harry and the Doctor. Later he had been captured himself by a Thal raiding party. He gave Sevrin and Sarah a pitying look. 'You'll work all right, muto. On the kind of job that kills you just as sure as a bullet will.'

'What work?' asked Sarah.

The young Kaled seemed to take a gloomy pleasure in breaking the bad news. 'The Thals have built a rocket. Used up the last of their manpower and resources in one final gamble. If they manage to launch it they'll wipe out the Kaled city and most of the Kaled race in one blow.'

Sarah gave him a puzzled look. 'So what are we needed for?'

'They're packing the nose-cone of the rocket with distronic explosives. To reduce weight, they're using no protective shielding. Every load we carry exposes us to distronic radiation. After two or three shifts you feel weaker. Eventually you die!'

Sarah looked at him in horror. Before she could speak a siren blared out and the prisoners shuffled wearily to their feet. She turned to the Kaled. 'What's that?'

'Rest period's over  time to start loading again.'

A Thal guard came over and prodded them to their feet with his rifle. 'All right,' snapped Sarah. 'No need to push!' She joined the long line of prisoners shuffling out of the door. Already her mind was busy with thoughts of escape.

The prisoners were marched through corridors and tunnels and finally into a huge concrete enclosure. Sarah caught her breath. Towering far above them was the deadly silver shape of the Thal rocket. The base of the rocket was supported by a framework of scaffolding, its nose-cone touched the roof far above their heads. Sarah guessed that a section of the dome would slide back at the moment of firing. Meanwhile the rocket was securely hidden inside the Thal city dome.

Sarah noticed that the guards in here wore all-over radiation suits, gauntlets and masks. She saw too that there was a dial inset in one wall, and that the final third of it was shaded red – presumably for the danger zone.

A steel door slid back and a small lifting-truck emerged, driven by a radiation-suited guard. The truck was loaded with ingots of some dull, silvery metal, and as soon as it entered the rocket silo, the needle on the radiation dial began climbing slowly towards the danger area.

By now the prisoners had been formed into a line, with Sarah and Sevrin somewhere near the end. One by one the prisoners lifted an ingot from the truck and, hugging it to their bodies, staggered over to the doors in the base of the rocket. When it came to Sevrin's turn, he lifted the ingot with ease and set off with it. Sarah was next. She hesitated, reluctant to touch the ingot, but a guard threatened with his rifle, and she was forced to pick it up. It was astonishingly heavy for its size and she had to hug it to her body to carry it. The ingot in her arms, Sarah stumbled towards the rocket doors.

In a tiny windowless cell in the Kaled bunker, Harry Sullivan sat on a bunk and waited. It seemed ages since they had taken the Doctor away. The longer Harry waited, the more worried he became. At last he heard the thump of booted feet in the corridor outside. The cell door clanged open and the Doctor was shoved in by a guard, who promptly shut and locked the door behind him. The Doctor threw himself on the bunk with a groan of relief. Harry perched on the metal stool beside him. 'How did you get on, Doctor? Are you all right?'

The Doctor gave him a weary nod.

'Did you tell them anything?'

The Doctor managed to grin. 'I told them *everything*, every bit of scientific gobbledygook I could think of. They took *reams* of notes. Their scientific experts will be confused for *weeks*!' The Doctor chuckled. 'I learned more from them than they did from me!'

'What about this Bunker, Doctor. Where are we? What's it all for?'

'Most of the place is underground, like these cells. It's a few miles from the main Kaled dome, bomb-proof and completely impregnable to attack.'

'What are they all doing here?'

The Doctor yawned and stretched, rubbing his bruises. Harry guessed that the security guards had given him the occasional thump to loosen his tongue.

'Years ago the Kaled Government decided to form an Elite Corps. All their leading scientists, plus security men to protect them. Over the years, this Elite has become so powerful that now it can demand anything it wants. . . .'

The Doctor stopped talking as they heard someone approaching outside. 'Perhaps it's the tea,' he said hopefully.

The door opened and Ronson appeared in the doorway, a guard behind him. He entered the cell and turned to the guard. 'It's all right, you needn't wait.' The man hesitated and Ronson snapped, 'I am armed. You can stay on duty outside.' The guard nodded and closed the door. Ronson looked at the Doctor stretched out on his bunk. 'I hope they didn't hurt you too much. I'm afraid I was unable to interfere.'

The Doctor waved a dismissive hand. 'I'm all right. The main thing is, you saved me from being the very first victim of a Dalek!'

Ronson started. 'How did you know that name? Just a few minutes ago, Davros announced that his new device would be known as a Dalek – an anagram of Kaled, the name of our race.'

'I have a certain advantage, in terms of time,' said the Doctor solemnly. 'In fact the reason I came was because of – well, let's say *future concern* about the development of Daleks.'

Ronson sank wearily on to the end of the bunk. 'I too am concerned,' he confessed. 'Others feel the same, but we are powerless.'

The Doctor sat up, leaning towards him. 'Perhaps I can help. But you'll have to trust me.'

Ronson glanced towards the cell door and dropped his voice. 'We believe that Davros has changed the direction of his research into something immoral. The Elite Corps was formed to produce weapons that would win this war. But soon we saw that was futile. Already the weapons used had begun to cause genetic changes. We were forced to turn our attention to the survival of our race.'

The Doctor nodded grimly. 'Meanwhile the early products of these genetic changes – the mutos - were banished to the Wastelands?'

'That's right. Davros believed this trend was irreversible, so he decided to work *with* it, to produce accelerated mutations in an effort to find our final mutated form. He produced what he calls the ultimate creature.' Ronson rose to his feet. 'Come with me, Doctor.' He rapped on the door and the guard

opened it. 'I require the assistance of these prisoners in certain top-secret experiments. You will release them into my custody.'

The guard looked doubtful, but the habit of obedience to the Scientific Elite was too strong in him. Dismissing the guard, Ronson led Harry and the Doctor in another direction. He took them along dimly-lit passages to a short corridor The roof was supported by heavy buttresses jutting out from the walls. The corridor ended in a massive metal door in which was set a small viewing-panel, covered by a shutter.

Ronson pulled the shutter to one side, revealing a thickly-glassed window. From inside it came a pulsating green glow. 'Take a look, Doctor.'

The Doctor peered through the little window then hurriedly stepped back. Harry saw the look of revulsion on his face but couldn't resist taking a quick look through the panel. He caught a fleeting glimpse of long rows of tanks, holding twisting, hideously deformed shapes. Then the Doctor moved him aside, sliding the shutter closed. 'I shouldn't, Harry. Not unless you want to lay in a permanent stock of nightmares.'

Ronson looked at them, and Harry saw the bitterness in his face. 'You see, Doctor? If Davros has his way, that is our future. *That* is what the Kaleds will become!'

In the big communal cell, Sarah was trying to whip up a spirit of revolt without success. 'Look,' she said fiercely. 'We have to do something *now*. A few more shifts and we won't have the strength. We've *got* to get out of here.'

The young Kaled patrol leader glanced across at the doors. 'That's just not possible.'

Sarah looked at the guards. They were leaning against the doors, rifles held casually in the crooks of their arms. 'Oh yes, it is. Those guards aren't expecting any trouble not from a group of worn-out slave-workers.'

'Supposing we do get out – we'll only be in the rocket silo. The exit from that goes through a Thal command point and that'll be crawling with troops.'

'There's another way out from the silo,' replied Sarah. 'Straight up! The scaffolding goes right up to the nose cone of the rocket. From there we could get out on to the surface of the dome, then climb down to the ground.'

Beside them the giant mutant Sevrin sat huddled beneath his all-concealing cloak and hood. 'Climb that scaffolding,' he protested mildly. 'It's very high.'

'I know,' said Sarah gently. 'I don't exactly fancy it myself. But it's our only chance to survive.' She had endured one long work-shift lugging the metal ingots into the rocket's storage chamber. The Kaled soldier had explained that while the first few shifts produced only normal fatigue, further exposure would begin a dangerous build-up of radiation effect in the body. Sarah was prepared to face any risk rather than that.

The patrol leader had already endured several shifts, and his face was grey and drawn. 'Why not,' he muttered. 'Better to take a chance than rot away here.'

'All right,' whispered Sarah. 'Now move round among the others. Recruit as many as you can!'

Guards came in with cauldrons of grey, mushy porridge, food providing the absolute minimum of nourishment, just enough to enable the prisoners to work. Bowlfuls of the stuff were passed out and the prisoners ate greedily with their fingers, afterwards licking the bowls till they were clean. During the general confusion produced by this 'feeding time', Sevrin and the young Kaled moved among the prisoners, explaining their plan for a break-out. Some prisoners fled from them in terror, others just stared blankly. But here

and there they found some willing to listen. There were still a few whose spirits were not completely broken.

When feeding was over and the bowls handed in, the three conspirators met in a corner. 'Well?' asked Sarah.

The Kaled soldier nodded fiercely. 'Some of my men were captured with me. They'll fight. So will most of the other soldiers.'

Sevrin however shook his head. 'The mutos are too frightened,' he explained sadly. 'We are always frightened. But *I* will help.'

'We'll just have to do the best we can,' Sarah said. 'Once we get started the rest will probably join in.'

The first part of the breakout was surprisingly easy. Sarah, Sevrin and the more aggressive prisoners all drifted slowly towards the door When Sarah was opposite the nearest guard she stumbled and fell against him, pretending to faint. Instinctively the guard grabbed her and the Kaled soldier chopped him down from behind. Before the second guard could react Sevrin sprang upon him, lifted him high in the air and dashed him to the ground. He stood looking at the motionless body as if astonished by his own daring.

'Come on,' yelled Sarah. 'Quickly!' She threw open the doors and the prisoners streamed out, overwhelming the guards on the other side. The breakout had begun!

## 5 Escape to Danger

The Doctor, Harry and Ronson were hurrying along the corridors beneath the Bunker. From time to time a passing guard glanced curiously at them, but the presence of one of the Scientific Elite proved a good enough passport. They talked in low voices as they walked. Ronson went on with his explanations. 'Davros says that having evolved our ultimate form, he then created a travel machine in which to house it.'

The Doctor nodded. 'And the two combined have produced a living weapon the Daleks! He's created a monster utterly devoid of conscience. Are you prepared to help me stop him?'

'I must,' said Ronson simply. 'There are those in the Kaled government who may still have the strength to act. If they knew the full truth they could end Davros's power, close down the Bunker and disband the Elite. I myself am not allowed to leave the Bunker. . . . But you two might make it.'

'Help us to escape,' urged the Doctor. 'Give me the names of the men you speak of and I promise you I'll make them listen.'

Was it going to be as easy as that, Harry wondered. He turned to Ronson. '*Can* you really get us out?'

'One of the ventilation-system ducts leads to a cave on the edge of the Wastelands. The exit is barred, but you might get through. But there's an added danger. . . .'

'I knew it,' said Harry. 'Go on.'

'Some of Davros's early experiments were with our wild animals. Horrific monsters were created – some of them were allowed to live as a controlled experiment.'

'Don't tell me they're in this cave we go through?'

Ronson nodded. Harry sighed. It certainly wasn't going to be so easy!

Ronson led them through smaller and smaller corridors, until they came to a short rock-walled tunnel. It ended in a blank wall into which was set a ventilation-duct, just large enough to admit a human body. A metal hatch covered the duct. It was stiff with disuse, and it took the Doctor and Harry

quite a time to wrench it open.

As they worked, Ronson was scribbling rapidly in a plastic-covered notebook. The hatch creaked open and he handed the book to the Doctor. 'I've written down the names of all the people you should try to contact giving the facts about Davros's research, and I've added a note of introduction to confirm your story. . . . If anything goes wrong. .'

'Don't worry, I'll see it's all destroyed.' The Doctor knew that with the notebook Ronson was placing his life in their hands.

Harry jumped up to the opening and wriggled through into the cramped tunnel. Ronson helped the Doctor to climb in after him. 'Hurry,' he gasped. 'I think someone's coming. Good luck!'

The Doctor's long legs disappeared into the duct and Ronson slammed the hatch-cover closed behind them. He turned and hurried back down the tunnel.

In the ventilation duct, Harry and the Doctor edged their way through total darkness Harry didn't know which to worry about most, the perils behind them or the dangers ahead.

A yelling crowd of prisoners burst out of the cell and milled round the base of the giant rocket. Some began running blindly towards the exits, only to encounter Thal guards running out from their command posts. The guards started shooting wildly into the crowd.

Sarah saw the young Kaled soldier fall early in the mêlée, but the giant form of Sevrin was still at her side. Together they pushed their way to the scaffolding and began climbing. Up and up they climbed, hand over hand until Sarah's arms were aching and the sounds of shooting and yelling seemed faint and distant.

Something bounced off the metal scaffolding near Sarah's head and whined away into space. She looked down and caught a brief glimpse of a Thal guard, his rifle pointing upwards. 'They're shooting at us,' she gasped. 'Come on.'

By now other prisoners were following their example, swarming up the scaffolding like monkeys. Many were picked off by the rifles of the Thal guards and crashed to the ground at the base of the rocket. Others were luckier, and the Thal Guard Captain soon realised there was real danger that many of his prisoners might get away. As more reinforcements arrived to deal with the prisoners, he slung his rifle over his shoulder and assembled a small group of reluctant soldiers. 'Come on – we're going up after them.' The soldiers began to climb.

High on the scaffolding, the nose-cone very close now, Sarah hung gasping. 'It's no good. I can't climb any more.'

Sevrin was close behind her. There seemed to be enormous strength in the great twisted body, and he could swing ape-like along the scaffolding with no sign of fatigue. 'You must go on, Sarah. See, they are coming after us.'

Sarah glanced down to see Thal soldiers swarming up the scaffolding in pursuit. Stronger and better fed than their escaping prisoners, they were catching up rapidly. Sarah started to climb again, but her tired sweating hands slipped on the scaffolding She felt herself dropping into space. A sudden jerk arrested her fall. Sevrin had caught her arm, taking her whole weight with one hand while he clung to the scaffolding with his other. Sarah swung back close to the scaffolding and managed to find a fresh hold.

At the top of the scaffolding, Sevrin was waiting for her. They were right by the nose-cone of the rocket, and the roof of the dome was only a few feet away. 'Look, Sarah. There's a section of the dome that slides away. We could reach it from the tip of the nose-cone and get out!'

'How do we get on to the nose-cone?'

'We'll have to jump for it I'll go first, then I can catch you.'

Sevrin poised himself for a moment, then leaped like a giant spider across the gap between the scaffolding and the nose-cone. He landed spread-eagled on the very tip of the rocket, hands scrabbling for a hold on the smoothly polished metal. When he felt secure he yelled. 'It's all right, Sarah Jump and I'll catch you.'

Sarah looked across. The gap seemed enormous, and stretching down below her was the entire length of the huge rocket. The figures round its base seemed like tiny moving dots. She clung to the scaffolding, shivering with fear.

'You've got to do it,' called Sevrin. 'Jump!'

Sarah looked down again. The pursuing Thal soldiers were very close. She jumped. She hit the nose-cone with a thump, and immediately started sliding off, but one of Sevrin's huge hands caught her and dragged her to safety on its rounded tip. A narrow ledge gave a foothold. 'We're nearly there,' he muttered reassuringly. 'Just a bit more and we'll be on the dome surface. We'll be safe.' Slowly Sevrin climbed to his feet. Balancing precariously on the very tip of the rocket's nose-cone he slid back the panel in the dome. Sarah felt a rush of cold air and saw the night sky through the gap. Sevrin had one hand on the edge of the gap, and was reaching down to pull Sarah through when a voice called out, 'That's far enough.'

The Thal soldiers had caught up with them. The Guard Captain was clinging to the scaffolding with one hand, levelling his rifle at them with the other. Close to him, the rest of his men were doing the same. 'Right,' he ordered. 'Back on the scaffolding.'

Sevrin sighed. Releasing his grip on the opening he took a flying leap and landed back on the scaffolding. Immediately a Thal soldier jammed a rifle in his ribs. 'Start climbing. No tricks, or you'll go down the quick way.' Obediently Sevrin started to descend.

The Guard Captain turned to Sarah. 'Now you.'

Hanging grimly on to the nose-cone, Sarah didn't dare move. 'All right,' said the Captain grimly. 'I'll come and get you.' He leaped confidently across the gap and landed on the rounded tip of the rocket where Sevrin had stood a moment earlier. 'Take my hand,' he ordered. Sarah reached up and he grasped her wrist. Suddenly he jerked. Sarah's feet slid from her precarious foothold. She was dangling over empty space supported by the Captain's hand.

The Guard Captain knew he would be punished because of the prisoners' revolt, and the knowledge made him cruel. He grinned down at Sarah. 'All I have to do is slacken my grip. . . . They say people who fall from great heights are dead before they hit the ground. I don't believe that, do you?' He pretended to let Sarah go and she moaned in fear. Tiring of his game the Captain pulled her back to safety. 'Don't worry, you're going back to work. Before long you'll wish I *had* let you drop.'

Harry felt the journey through the cramped dark tunnel was never going to end. Maybe they were lost, he thought, maybe they'd die here in these tunnels. Suddenly he felt cold, damp air, and saw a dim glow of light. 'I think we're nearly there, Doctor,' he called behind him. The tunnel widened a little towards its end, which was blocked by heavy wire mesh.

The Doctor squeezed up beside Harry. 'That must be the entrance to the cave. So all we've got to do is . . .' A snuffling grunt came out of the darkness.

'Must be one of Davros's little pets,' Harry whispered nervously. They waited in silence. Something big and shapeless brushed past the other side of

the grille, and they heard it shamble away into the darkness. They waited a moment longer.

'Well, whatever it was, it's gone,' the Doctor said cheerfully. 'Give me a hand, Harry.' Using their combined strength, they managed to prise off the grille.

'After you, Doctor,' said Harry politely.

The Doctor grinned and slipped into the cave. Harry followed him. The cave was very dark, and he was aware of little more than a dank rock wall close beside him. But there did seem to be a lighter patch somewhere in the distance. The Doctor tapped his shoulder. 'Keep close to the wall, Harry, and make for the light.'

As they shuffled along, Harry was almost grateful for the darkness. Whatever was in the cave, he thought he'd be a lot happier if he *didn't* see it. They reached the light source without incident. It proved to be a very small barred window looking out on to the Wastelands.

'We've made it,' said Harry exultantly. 'Come on, Doctor.' He hurried towards the window. The Doctor was peering cautiously at the ground just beneath the window. A giant round shape was half-buried in the ground.

'Harry, be careful ' the Doctor called. But he was too late. The hump seemed to split into two separate halves. They widened like gaping jaws and clashed down on Harry's leg. Harry let out a howl of pain and the Doctor ran to his side.

Harry's leg was gripped tight by what appeared to be a kind of giant clam, several feet across. Hissing fiercely the creature was trying to drag Harry into the darkness of the cave, no doubt hoping to digest him at leisure. The Doctor grabbed a chunk of rock and hammered at the shell, but it was iron-hard. Remorselessly the sliding horror dragged Harry further away. The Doctor glanced round for a weapon. He saw a jagged spear-like piece of rock projecting from one wall. Using his rock as a hammer he broke it away, ran back to Harry and jammed the improvised spear into the gap in the giant shell. He rammed the sharp stone deep inside the clam, using all his strength. With a hiss of pain, the 'jaws' sprang open. Harry fell backwards, free, and the creature slithered away in the darkness.

The Doctor knelt beside Harry who was moaning and clutching his leg. He made a brief examination. 'Nasty bruise there, but nothing seems to be broken,' he said briskly. 'You had a lucky escape, Harry. That must have been one of Davros's nastier experiments.'

Harry rubbed his leg tenderly. 'Why is it always me who puts his foot in it?'

The Doctor slapped him on the back. 'You'll be all right, Harry. Can you walk yet?'

'Just about.' Harry hobbled a few steps.

'Then we'd better get out of here. It's not a place to hang about.'

As they wrenched at the rusting bars in the window Harry said, 'When we're out in the Wastelands, Doctor, can't we have a look for Sarah?'

The Doctor shook his head. 'At the moment we're just a couple of fugitives. We'd be shot or imprisoned in no time. There's still a war going on, remember. But if we warn the Kaled Government about Davros – well they'll owe us a favour, won't they? We can ask for an official search.'

Harry looked worried and the Doctor gave him a reassuring grin.

'Don't worry, Harry, we'll find her, I promise you. But one problem at a time. And our problem now is to get past these bars.'

In the Bunker's main laboratory, Davros was holding a demonstration. This time *two* Daleks were gliding backwards and forwards along the laboratory. They completed a complicated sequence of evolutions, then came to halt before Davros's chair. The grating voice of the nearer one said, 'We await your commands.'

Chillingly like that of his creation, the voice of Davros spoke, 'No further command. Disengage automotive circuits.' The lights on the Daleks' heads went out, their guns and sucker-arms drooped. 'Excellent,' said Davros in a satisfied voice.

One of his retinue of scientists, a plump, smooth little man called Kavell, leaned forward obsequiously. 'They are perfect, Davros. A truly brilliant creation.'

The rasping voice corrected him. 'A brilliant creation, yes. But not perfect. Scientist-Technicians!' Davros raised his hand and a group of younger men hurried forward. 'Improvements must be made in the optical systems and the sensory circuits. Their instincts must be as accurate as any scientific instrument. Work will begin at once. You will carry out the following adjustments. . . .'

As Davros's voice droned on, Kavell slipped away from the group and moved across to the corner desk where Ronson sat working. He peered over

Ronson's shoulders as if checking his results, and said quietly, 'Does Davros know that your two alien prisoners have escaped?'

Ronson glanced up quickly, then went on with his work. 'As far as I know the prisoners are in their cell.'

'Don't worry, Ronson, I won't betray you. You're not the only one worried about Davros's plans. Now answer me. Does Davros know?'

'The prisoners are in their cell,' repeated Ronson. He didn't trust Kavell enough to make any damaging admissions.

The plump little man chuckled. 'I have some news for you, Ronson. Your two prisoners have managed to cross the Wastelands and make contact with certain members of the Government.'

'How do you know that?'

Kavell smiled complacently. 'There are still some advantages to being in charge of the communications system.' He looked across the laboratory to where Davros sat surrounded by his admiring assistants. 'All we can do now is hope that your friends manage to convince our leaders that Davros's work must be ended.'

Kavell walked away, and Ronson buried his head in his hands. 'They must succeed,' he muttered to himself. 'They *must*!'

In the Kaled City, Harry Sullivan sat in a luxurious underground conference room, scarcely able to believe what was happening. Only the Doctor could possibly have managed it, thought Harry. No one else would have the cheek!

When the window bars had finally given way, the Doctor had led Harry across the Wastelands to one of the main entrances to the Kaled City. Marching straight up to an astonished sentry, the Doctor had demanded to see his superior officer. Then he had bullied his way up the chain of command, intimidating a Captain, a Colonel and finally a full-blown General, with impressive but vague talk of a vitally important top-secret mission, and repeated demands to be put in touch with certain important members of the Kaled Government, dropping their names freely, as if they were old friends.

Several times Harry felt that various officers had been on the point of having them shot, but the Doctor's bare-faced audacity had at last succeeded. They had been granted an interview with Mogran, one of the names on Ronson's list.

Mogran had listened sceptically at first, then with increasing concern. He had studied the letter and the details of Davros's experiments in Ronson's notebook. Finally he had summoned a secret meeting in this hidden conference room.

Now Morgan was addressing his fellow councillors, while the Doctor waited beside him. Harry was amused to see that Ravon, the young General from whom they'd first escaped, was also at the meeting, puzzled to find his former prisoners being treated as honoured guests.

Mogran, an impressively robed figure with silver hair, was concluding his speech, '... and it is only because I am personally convinced of both the accuracy and importance of the Doctor's information that I ask you to listen to him now. Doctor?'

The Doctor stepped forward, as relaxed and authoritative as the guest-of-honour on some state occasion. 'Some of what I am about to tell you concerns events in the future. Events not only on this planet, but on other planets whose existence is not even known to you. ...'

A murmur of surprise went up from the audience. The Doctor raised his hand. 'I realise that may be hard to accept, but my knowledge is based firmly on scientific fact. I *know* that Davros is creating a machine creature, a

monster that will terrorise and destroy millions. He has given this vile creature a name – a name that is a distortion of that of your own race - DALEK! The word is new to you, but for a thousand generations it will bring fear and terror.' The Doctor paused impressively. 'Davros has one of the finest scientific minds in his existence. But he has a fanatical desire to perpetuate himself in his creation. He is without conscience, without soul and without pity, and his creations are equally devoid of these qualities. . . .'

As the Doctor went on with his speech, Harry slumped down in his seat. Would the Doctor be able to convince them? The fate of this world, and of many more, depended on his success. . . .

# 6 Betrayal

Davros watched with satisfaction as a team of scientists and technicians toiled to make the improvements he had demanded for his Daleks. Through the vision-lens that provided him with sight, he saw Security-Commander Nyder enter the laboratory and come towards him. Davros wheeled his chair to a secluded corner, and Nyder joined him. He leaned forward urgently, keeping his voice low. 'Davros, I've just had word from one of our supporters in the Government. Your old enemy Councillor Mogran has called a meeting. Only known opponents of your Scientific Elite have been invited to attend.'

Davros clenched and unclenched his withered hand. 'I want a full report of everything that's discussed. I don't care how you get the information . . . just get it!' After a moment he went on more calmly. 'I don't think we need be too concerned. Many times in the past fifty years opponents in the Government have tried to interfere with my research. They have always failed – they will fail again.'

'There's something else,' Nyder said. 'The two alien prisoners left in Ronson's charge. They are attending the meeting.'

Davros turned his chair so that he could see Ronson working in his corner. Nyder followed the direction of his gaze. 'What action shall I take concerning the traitor Ronson?' The lipless mouth of Davros twitched in what might have been a smile.

'For the moment, none. I shall deal with him in my own way.'

The meeting was drawing to its close. The Kaled politicians were talking among themselves, occasionally glancing across to the Doctor and Harry. General Ravon, who seemed to take no part in the deliberations, was standing nearby. Harry wondered if he was guarding them. The suspense was getting on his nerves. 'Do you think you convinced them, Doctor?' he whispered.

'I'm not sure, Harry, I tried, but sometimes words just aren't enough.'

Harry saw a bustle of movement on the other side of the conference room. 'Looks as if they've reached a decision.'

With muttered farewells the other councillors were hurrying away, leaving Mogran behind. He came over to the Doctor, who jumped eagerly to his feet. 'Well, what have you decided?'

'It has been agreed that an independent tribunal will investigate the work being carried out at the Bunker.'

'That could take months,' protested the Doctor. 'Davros has prototype Daleks ready for action *now*!'

Mogran held up his hand. 'It has also been agreed that pending the result of the investigation, Davros's Dalek experiments will be suspended.'

The Doctor brightened. 'Now that's more like it - though mind you, it's less than I'd hoped for. . . .'

Mogran gave him the reassuring smile of a politician. 'I assure you, Doctor, if your allegations are born out the Bunker will be closed down, and Davros dismissed. Meanwhile, you are welcome to remain here as our guests.'

'I'm afraid we haven't time for that,' the Doctor said briskly. 'One of my companions was lost in the Wastelands almost as soon as we arrived. I'd be very glad if you'd give us some help in finding her.'

Mogran looked ill-at-ease. Glancing round for a solution he caught sight of General Ravon, and passed the buck with polished skill. 'I'm afraid that's outside my sphere. But General Ravon here will give you all the help he can. I must go and inform Davros of my Committee's decision.' Mogran left the room, and Harry turned aggressively to Ravon. He didn't much fancy leaving Sarah's fate in the hands of one who'd so recently been their enemy.

'Well, General,' he demanded, '*can* you help us?'

'As a matter of fact, I believe I can,' Ravon replied surprisingly. 'One of our agents inside the Thal dome sent a report about a newly arrived girl prisoner who led some kind of breakout among the slave-workers. Gave the Thals a lot of trouble before she was recaptured.'

Harry said eagerly, 'Well, that certainly *sounds* like Sarah. What's all this about slaves?'

'The Thals are using prisoners to load their last great rocket. It's their super-weapon. They think they'll win the war with it.'

'You don't seem very worried.'

Ravon smiled confidently. 'No matter how powerful the rocket, it will never penetrate our protective dome. Davros had it reinforced with a protective coating, a new substance with the strength of thirty-foot concrete.'

'Congratulations,' said the Doctor drily. 'Now how can you help us find Sarah?'

Ravon looked doubtful. 'One of my agents could get you into the service shafts under the Thal rocket silo. But after that, you'd be on your own.'

'Understood,' said the Doctor. 'Let's be on our way.'

He seemed ready to set off at once. Harry caught his arm. 'I'm as anxious to rescue Sarah as you are, Doctor, but do you think there'd be time for a bite to eat first? It's been all go since we arrived.'

The Doctor looked at Ravon who said, 'Yes of course. Come with me and I'll arrange it.'

As they followed him from the room Harry said, 'I suppose we'll have to cross those Wastelands again.'

'That's right,' the Doctor smiled. 'And then our troubles will really begin.' You might almost have thought he was looking forward to it.

Councillor Mogran was an extremely worried man. Somehow everything was going far too smoothly. He'd expected fiercely determined opposition from Davros. Instead he was encountering an unnerving degree of co-operation. 'An investigation?' Davros was saying. 'But of course, Councillor Mogran. I welcome your inquiry into my work here. The Kaled people sacrifice much to give us the materials we need. They have a right to know how our work is proceeding. My only hope is that when they learn of our achievements their patriotism will be re-fired.'

Mogran could say little in face of such sentiments. 'I am grateful for the way you have accepted this decision, Davros. There is one thing more until the inquiry is concluded, all work on the Daleks must be suspended.'

'If that is your wish, then I must obey. It will take time to close down certain

equipment. Shall we say twenty-four hours?'

The request was so reasonable that Mogran did not dare to refuse it entirely. 'Shall we say *twelve* hours?' he countered.

'It will be difficult but it will be done.'

Mogran prepared to leave. 'Then it remains only for me to thank you for your co-operation.'

Davros bowed his ghastly skull-like head. 'It is simply my duty. The investigation will reveal only my loyalty and total dedication to our cause.'

Mogran left the laboratory. Nyder, who had been a silent witness to the confrontation, leaned over Davros's chair. 'We cannot allow this investigation. The stupidest councillors cannot fail to see that the Daleks will give *you* total power. They will end the experiment.'

'There will *be* no investigation,' Davros answered. 'Mogran has just signed the death-warrant of his city. Only we, the Elite, will go on.'

Nyder looked at him in astonishment, but said nothing.

'I want twenty of the genetically-mutated creatures installed in the machines immediately. They will be our shock-troops in the battle for survival.'

'They're still erratic, mentally unstable,' Nyder protested.

'They will not be allowed *total* self control. I shall prepare a computer programme to limit their actions. Come, Nyder. We are going on a journey!'

The Doctor and Harry were close to their destination the Thal rocket silo where they hoped to find and rescue Sarah. After a hasty meal, Ravon had handed them over to one of his agents, a weasly-looking man who spoke only when strictly necessary. Disguised in the hooded cloaks of mutos, the Doctor and Harry had been led by way of hidden paths and abandoned trenches across the central Wastelands to the outskirts of the Thal dome. Shifting a carefully-hidden hatchway, the agent had then gone underground, leading them through an interminable series of cramped tunnels and passageways where mysterious machinery hummed and throbbed. Finally he had stopped in a corridor junction, pointing to a ladder, bolted to the wall, which gave access to a hatch-cover. 'You're right underneath the silo now. That's all I can do for you. Here's your map!' And with that he had slipped away into the darkness.

Harry and the Doctor stripped off their muto disguise. 'Well, might as well get on with it,' said the Doctor. He climbed the ladder till he was high enough to raise the hatch-cover a few inches and peep through the gap. 'Seems clear enough. Come on, Harry.' Carefully the Doctor lifted the hatch and climbed through, reaching down to help Harry after him. They replaced the cover and looked at their surroundings.

They were in a featureless concrete corridor. Nearby was a door, the top-half glassed in. A notice read, 'Launch Control'. The Doctor checked his map. 'We seem to have surfaced in the administrative block,' he whispered. 'But we're pretty near the rocket.'

Impelled by his usual curiosity, the Doctor couldn't resist a swift peep through the glass panel in the Launch Control door. He stiffened in sudden surprise and beckoned Harry over. Harry joined him. The place was crowded with all the paraphernalia of a rocket control room, but now it was full of people too. Some wore military uniform, others robed like those of Kaled councilmen, though of different design. They were surrounding two central figures, who were set apart from the rest. To Harry's astonishment he saw Davros, in his wheelchair, Nyder beside him. He nudged the Doctor. 'What's the chief scientist of the Kaleds doing in the Thal rocket base?'

The Doctor touched a finger to his lips. With infinite caution he opened the door the merest crack, and Harry heard the metallic, inhuman tones of Davros. '... my concern is only for peace, for an end to the carnage that has virtually destroyed *both* races.'

Davros was talking to a high-ranking Thal minister, summoned specially for this incredible meeting. Like his Kaled opposite number, Mogran, the minister was a tall, imposing man with an air of great authority. There was scepticism in his voice. 'Why not try to convince the Kaled government to make peace?'

'I have tried, time and time again. They will settle for nothing less than total extermination of the Thals.'

Davros's deliberately provocative announcement was greeted with angry murmurings. 'Then they deserve to perish,' the minister replied coldly. 'And perish they shall. Our rocket —'

'— will be a total failure.' The voice of Davros completed the sentence. 'The Kaled city dome cannot be penetrated. It is protected by a special material of my invention. Your rocket will hardly scratch it unless you accept my help.' Nyder produced a sheaf of papers and held them out. 'This is the measure of our sincerity. A simple chemical formula. Load the substance into normal artillery shells and bombard the Kaled dome. The dome will be weakened, its molecular structure made brittle. Then your rocket will penetrate with virtually no resistance.'

The Minister took the papers and looked at them incredulously. 'Why do you give us this information, when it means the end of your city?'

'No price is too great for peace,' Davros said solemnly. 'When the war is finally over, I ask only to be allowed to take part in the reconstruction of our world. And, remember, dawn tomorrow this planet could be at peace.'

The minister spoke slowly, 'If you would give me a moment to confer with my colleagues alone?'

Davros's chair began moving towards the door. The Doctor and Harry ducked back, and disappeared round the corner. After a moment they heard Nyder's lowered voice. 'Do you think they believed you, Davros?'

'They are hungry for victory. They will use the formula, and fire their rocket, no matter what they think.'

The door opened and again they heard the minister's voice. 'A barrage of shells containing the formula will begin at once. The rocket launch will follow immediately. I shall see that you are given safe escort from the city.'

As the minister led his two visitors away, the Doctor and Harry emerged from hiding. 'We'll have to warn the Kaleds,' muttered the Doctor.

'Not before we find Sarah,' Harry said firmly.

'Of course not,' agreed the Doctor. 'Come on, Harry, don't just stand there.'

Guided by the Kaled spy's map, they made their way along the corridors towards the rocket. Suddenly the Doctor heard footsteps approaching from an intersecting corridor. He peered round the corner and saw two Thal guards, both dressed in anti-radiation suits, marching along the corridor towards him. He ducked back, whispered a few words to Harry, and then stepped blithely round the corner. Hat on the back of his head, long scarf dangling, the Doctor had passed the two guards before they had time to take in his extraordinary appearance. As soon as it did register, both guards spun round, rifles levelled. 'Hey,' called one of them. 'Who are you?'

The Doctor walked back towards them, his eyes wide and innocent. 'Well, as a matter of fact I'm a spy. I wonder if you could help me I'm looking for this rocket of yours....'

The astonished guard gaped at him giving Harry Sullivan time to fell him

with a rabbit-punch below the ear. The first guard dropped, the second turned and the Doctor knocked him out. They dragged their victims round the corner and out of sight.

Beneath the towering bulk of the huge rocket, the motley band of slave workers were coming to the end of their task. Sarah staggered wearily as she came out of the rocket. Sevrin caught her by the arm, supporting her. One of the guards laughed. 'Don't worry, that was the last consignment. You can have all the rest you need now.'

As the prisoners came out of the rocket they were bunched into a group under the rifles of a couple of guards. The rest of the Thal soldiers marched away. Sarah looked at Sevrin. 'If the rocket is loaded, why are they keeping us here?'

The giant muto shrugged. 'Why should they bother to move us?'

Sarah looked up at the rocket. 'But when that thing goes off, we'll all be killed.'

'Our lives are of no more interest to them.'

Sevrin seemed resigned to his fate, but Sarah certainly was not. Their second shift on the rocket had been a fairly short one, and so far Sarah was feeling no ill effects other than normal tiredness. She was fairly sure her exposure had been too short to do serious damage, and she was by no means ready to abandon hope of escape.

She looked round. Only two guards now they could always have another go at breaking out. Her heart sank as two more guards in radiation suits walked into the silo. They walked up to the soldiers guarding the prisoners, then suddenly jumped them. There was a flurry of blows and the Thal soldiers were knocked out. The new arrivals started removing their radiation suits. To her amazement and delight, Sarah found herself looking at the Doctor and Harry Sullivan.

The Doctor ran across and gave her a hug. 'Are you all right, Sarah?'

'I am now,' she said. 'But we've got to get out of here. The Thals are just about to set this rocket off.'

'I know. Sarah, you've got to go with Harry. Harry, here's the map, you can find a way out. Get to the Kaled dome and tell General Ravon what we've learned. He must evacuate at once.'

Sarah looked at the Doctor sadly, realising that their reunion was to be very brief. 'What are you going to do?'

'I'll try to sabotage the rocket and delay the launch. There's no time to argue, off you go!' He turned to the other prisoners. 'Go on all of you – you're free. Escape while you can.'

Dazedly the prisoners began stumbling off. Sarah noticed a bewildered Sevrin staring about. 'You come with us, Sevrin,' she called. The muto moved over to join them.

The Doctor waved his arms. 'Off you go, the lot of you – I've work to do.'

Sarah still hesitated, but he was obviously quite determined. Harry took her arm. 'Come along, old girl, or we'll all be caught.' Sarah allowed him to lead her away.

Harry took Sarah and Sevrin out of the silo and along the corridors. His eyes were on the ground and he stopped when he saw a hatch like the one they'd emerged from. 'This'll do.' With Sevrin helping, Harry lifted the hatch and sent first Sevrin, then Sarah down into the darkness of the service tunnel. Just as he was about to climb down himself, Thal soldiers ran round the corner, firing as they came. Harry bolted through the hatchway, bullets whizzing over his head, landing on top of Sarah and Sevrin. 'Come on,

they're after us,' he yelled. The three disentangled themselves and set off along the tunnel at a run.

In the silo the Doctor heard the sound of firing and hoped his friends were still safe. Then he dismissed them from his mind, reserving all his concentration for the task at hand. He studied the rocket thoughtfully. Perhaps if he started by severing the exterior fuel lines.... The Doctor took a knife from the body of an unconscious guard and purposefully approached the massive tail fin of the rocket. He leaned forward, jabbed with the knife... there was a sudden shower of blue sparks, and a crackling noise. Twisting in agony, the Doctor's body was thrown clear across the silo. He crashed to the ground and lay still.

In the Rocket control room, a technician studied a flickering dial. 'Better check the silo,' he called to a guard. 'Someone's trying sabotage.'

The Thal minister, waiting to watch the launch, said anxiously, 'Any damage?'

The technician shook his head. 'He ran into our electrical defence system. Probably dead by now.'

In the silo, guards were running towards the motionless body of the Doctor.

# 7 Countdown to Destruction

The Doctor heard a voice moaning and muttering. 'Must stop rocket . . . warn . . .' To his surprise he realised the voice was his own.

There came another voice. 'Still alive is he? A shock like that should have killed him immediately.'

Then a gruffer voice, 'What do we do with him, Minister?'

'Oh, I've no time now,' said the first voice fussily. 'Leave him where he is till after the launch. I'll interrogate him myself if I've time. Otherwise you chaps can have him.'

The Doctor opened his eyes cautiously, then closed them again, since the whole room was spinning like a Catherine wheel. He made a mighty effort and tried again, first one eye then the other. He was in the Rocket control room, the room in which he'd watched Davros betray his people not so long ago. But he couldn't move. . . .

The Doctor realised that he had been lashed by the arms into a wheeled metal chair and shoved into a corner, a piece of unimportant, unfinished business to be dealt with later. The room was a bustle of activity as civilian and military VIP's got in the way of the technical staff desperately preparing for the countdown.

The minister was looking at a monitor screen which showed a picture of the Kaled City beneath its protective dome. The dome was in a bad state now, broken in several places, with creeping stain spreading over its surface. 'It's working,' said the minister exultantly. 'The Kaled dome is breaking up. Start the countdown!'

Helpless in his chair the Doctor shouted, 'No you mustn't.' No one took any notice except for the guard, who gave him an absent-minded cuff to silence him. Everyone was intent on the big digital clock which dominated the main control panel. It was counting down from fifty forty-nine, forty-eight, forty-seven . . .

Other monitors were alive now, showing the missile on its launch-pad. The clock was still counting down, through the thirties, twenties, into single figures . . . ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five . . .

Using the wall behind him as a lever the Doctor kicked fiercely backwards, sending his wheeled chair skidding into the main control console. He lashed frantically with his feet at the instrument panel, but the guard pulled him back, and the Doctor's feet flailed uselessly in the air. Two . . . one . . . blast-off! Helplessly the Doctor watched as the missile lifted from its pad and set off on the brief journey towards the Kaled dome.

Now everyone's attention shifted back to the monitors showing the dome as, battered and broken, it awaited final destruction. There was a blinding flash, a distant explosion that shook the control room. When the smoke cleared the Kaled dome had disappeared. Flames roared in the crater that had replaced it, like those of some newly-born volcano.

Cheers and shouts echoed through the Thal control room. Only the Doctor sat silent, his head slumped on his chest, appalled as always by the corrupting brutality of war. Thousands of their fellow-creatures dead, and these people were cheering. On top of that, there was his own, personal loss. He had sent Sarah and Harry back to the Kaled city the city that was now no more than a guttering inferno on the monitor screen.

The same terrible picture was seen on another monitor screen, this one in Davros's bunker, some miles from the Kaled city. The bunker had been far

enough away, and sufficiently deep underground to escape the effects of the rocket. Davros and his Elite Corps of scientists and security men were quite unharmed.

Davros wheeled his chair away from the screen. 'Switch it off,' he ordered, and one of the scientists hurried to obey. Davros turned to the awe-stricken group around him. 'Never fear, my friends. We shall avenge the destruction of our city with retaliation so massive and so merciless that it will live in history.' He touched the control on his chair-arm and a group of three Daleks glided into the laboratory. They formed a line before Davros, awaiting his commands. Davros looked round the room. 'Let our vengeance begin with the destruction of the Thal agent, Ronson. It was he who betrayed us to the Thals. He gave them the formula which made possible the destruction of our beloved city.'

Gliding smoothly, the line of Daleks swung round to encircle Ronson, who cowered back into his corner. 'No, no,' he babbled. 'It isn't true. . . .'

Viciously Davros hissed, 'Exterminate! Exterminate! Exterminate!'

The Dalek guns blazed and Ronson was hurled across the room. His body collapsed, a charred and smoking ruin, against the far wall. Davros spoke, not to the horrified Kaled scientists, but to the Daleks. 'Today the Kaled city and much of the Kaled race has ended, consumed in the fires of war. But from the ashes will rise the supreme creature, the ultimate conqueror of the Universe the Dalek!'

No one moved or spoke. Still ignoring the scientists, Davros addressed his creations. 'Today you begin a journey that will take the Daleks to their destiny of universal and absolute supremacy. You have been programmed to complete a task. You will now begin.'

In response to Davros's speech the leading Dalek spoke only two words. But in them was the whole of the Dalek creed. In that grinding, metallic voice, so hideously like Davros's own it said, 'We obey.' The Daleks turned and glided from the laboratory.

In the Thal Rocket control room, the rejoicing went on. Wine was produced, toasts were drunk. No one thought about the Doctor, slumped head-down in his corner.

The minister was in the full flood of his eloquence. 'A thousand years of war, and now it's ended. Listen to the people, they know already.' From outside the control room came a growing rumble of distant cheering, as the good news spread through the Thal City. 'I must speak to them,' said the minister. 'There must be a victory parade. Come, there is much to be done. . . .'

He began to lead his fellow VIPs from the room. As they passed the Doctor, one of the minister's special aides, a tall, severe-looking girl called Bettan asked, 'What about him?'

The minister glared indignantly at the Doctor. 'He must be punished, executed. . . .' The minister broke off. He was a kindly man at heart, and he really wasn't in the mood to think about such distasteful matters as executions. 'No let us show that although ruthless in war, we Thals can be merciful in victory. All political prisoners will be freed, and all charges dropped. Release him!' The minister swept out, and at a nod from Bettan the guard began untying the Doctor. He rose and stretched his tall figure, his face sad. Bettan turned to go, then hesitated. There was something curiously compelling about this odd-looking man in the strange clothes.

'You had friends in the Kaled City?' she said gently.

'Two people very dear to me. The worst of it is, I sent them back into that.' He glanced at the monitor where the ruined remains of the Kaled city could be

seen, still burning fiercely.

'What will you do now?'

'Start again. Try to complete what I came here to do.'

'What was that?' Bettan asked curiously.

'Stop the development of the Daleks, the machine creatures Davros has created. Creatures as evil as he is himself.'

'Davros is interested only in achieving peace. *He* told us how to destroy the Kaled dome,' Bettan protested.

The Doctor shook his head emphatically. 'The Kaleds themselves realised the danger of Davros's experiments. They were about to stop him. Rather than let that happen, he betrayed his own people.'

'You'll never convince the Thals that Davros is evil,' said Bettan. 'He's become a popular hero!'

The Doctor nodded, lost in thought.

'You're *free* now,' said Bettan. 'You can go where you please.'

'Thank you,' the Doctor said absently. With a sudden, charming smile, he wandered away.

Bettan was an efficient and hard-working young woman, with an important official position. Arrangements for the victory celebrations kept her busy during the next few hours. But she often found herself thinking of the strange man in the control room. She had no idea of the terrifying circumstances under which she was to meet him again.

'And there you have it, gentlemen. That outlines the chromosomal variations to be introduced into the genetic structuring of the embryo Daleks. They are to be implemented at once.' Through his vision-lens, Davros looked irritably around the small group of leading scientists. Their faces did not hold the approval and adulation to which he had become accustomed. Instead they looked shocked, disapproving even. It was Gharman, the group-leader, who spoke for the rest.

'Davros . . . the changes you outline will create enormous mental defects.'

'They will not be defects they will be improvements,' snapped the metallic voice.

'It will mean creatures without conscience. No sense of right or wrong, no pity. They'll be completely without feeling or emotion.'

'That is correct. That is the purpose of the changes. See that they are carried out - without question, Gharman.'

No one dared object further, and the scientists left to begin their tasks. Nyder, who had entered in time to witness the end of this scene, smiled thinly and went over to Davros. 'The Dalek task-force is in position,' he said. 'They await your order.'

'I see no reason for further delay.' The withered hand dropped down on a control. Miles away, on the edge of the Thal City, Daleks began to move forward

The Doctor made his way with difficulty through the rejoicing Thal city. The place was completely roofed-in, like one enormous building. Corridors, streets, squares and walk-ways were jammed with excited revellers, all celebrating the end of a war which had been going on their whole lives. It was rather like being forced to attend an enormous noisy party when not really in the mood. People hugged the Doctor, slapped him on the back and even tried to kiss him. Others pressed food and drink on him, and urged him to join parties in their homes.

Slowly the Doctor forged ahead, accepting some refreshment, but smilingly

refusing all other invitations. At last, as he came to the edge of the city, things were a little quieter. The Doctor was looking for a way out into the Wastelands. He intended to make his way to Davros's bunker, though he had no very clear idea what he would do when he got there.

Dodging a group of revellers dancing in the city square, the Doctor moved on. He could still hear the sound of shouts and laughter behind him. Suddenly, silence fell. Then there were screams, shouts of terror. The Doctor ran back the way he had come. Turning into the little square he stopped appalled. The bodies of dancers were strewn all over the square, contorted in attitudes of sudden death. A Dalek was methodically shooting down the fleeing survivors. A second Dalek glided out to join it. Across the square came the familiar hated voices. 'Exterminate! Exterminate! Exterminate!'

The Doctor turned and ran back towards the gate. There was nothing he could possibly do here. It was all the more urgent that he tackle the evil at its source.

As the Doctor ran he heard shouts and screams of terror from all over the city. He could easily guess what was happening. The happy, careless Thals, the sinister shapes gliding from the shadows, the cries of 'Exterminate!' and the blazing Dalek guns. Then the heaps of charred, smoking bodies as the Daleks moved off to continue their dreadful work. . . .

The main gate of the Thal city stood open and unguarded. No wonder the Daleks had entered so easily. As the Doctor ran up to the gate he collided with a fleeing figure. It was Bettan, the girl he had seen in the control room. She clutched his arm. 'There are *machines* all over the city. Killing everybody without mercy. Are those the things you told me about, the things you said Davros made?'

The Doctor grabbed her and pulled her into the shelter of a doorway. A line of sinister metal shapes glided into the square, driving before them a group of running figures. Dalek guns opened fire, the fleeing Thals twisted and fell. The Doctor and Bettan froze motionless in their doorway. The Daleks surveyed the square a moment longer, then turned and glided back into the city. Only then did the Doctor answer Bettan's question. 'Yes,' he said softly. 'Those are the Daleks. Come on, we'll be safer in the Wastelands than here.' They made their way out through the gates and across the Wastelands.

Soon the city was invisible behind them, lost in the perpetual fog and darkness of the Wastelands. They found an abandoned trench and sat down to rest. Bettan was still unable to take in what had happened. 'Davros didn't need to go that far. When our leaders knew they were beaten they would have surrendered.'

'Perhaps they tried,' said the Doctor. 'The Daleks accept no terms. Davros has conditioned them to wipe the Thals from this planet.'

'Some of us will survive,' Bettan said fiercely. 'And we'll fight back.'

The Doctor looked hard at her. 'Do you mean that? Are you really prepared to help me?'

'I'll do anything I can.'

'Even go back to the city?'

Bettan winced, but her voice was steady. 'Even that . . . if it'll really help.'

The Doctor leaned forward. 'To destroy the Daleks, we must destroy Davros himself,' he said urgently. 'I'm going back into the Bunker and do whatever I can. But I need the backing of some kind of fighting force.' Bettan looked puzzled.

'What can I do?'

'You said yourself, there are bound to be *some* survivors. If you could organise them, find arms and explosives, make an attack on Davros's bunker

it could be the diversion I'll need. As yet there aren't so many Daleks in existence. If you stay out of their way there's a chance. Will you try it?' Bettan nodded. She stood up. 'Good-bye and good luck.'

Bettan slipped out of the trench and began retracing their steps, back towards the city. As she came within sight of the main gate she saw Daleks gliding through the streets, illuminated by the flames of the burning buildings. Dodging from one hiding place to another, Bettan made her way back towards the city, steeling herself against the horrors she would find inside.

The Doctor meanwhile moved across the Wastelands in the opposite direction. He was working his way along a slit-trench that seemed to run in the right direction, when suddenly a cloaked form sprang down and grappled with him. Of all the times to run into a hostile muto, thought the Doctor despairingly. Enemies to everything but their own twisted and abandoned kind, the mutos attacked all strangers on sight. The Doctor disposed of his attacker fairly easily, but soon realised that he had more than one to deal with. More and more cloaked and hooded figures piled on top of him, and soon the Doctor was spread-eagled on his back in the mud, held powerless in the grip of many hands. One of the mutos, evidently a leader, looked round for some weapon to finish him. There was a jagged rock on the ground nearby. The muto lifted it up, raising it above his head with difficulty. He stood there, poised, ready to crash the rock down on the Doctor's head. . . .

## 8 Captives of Davros

The Doctor struggled desperately to escape, but too many bodies were holding him down. Just as the rock seemed about to fall, a burly figure shoulder-charged the muto, sending him flying. The Doctor looked up into the face of Harry Sullivan! The jagged rock thudded into the mud close to the Doctor's head. Then a huge figure started plucking the other mutos from the Doctor, throwing them through the air in all directions.

Terrified by the sudden assault, the band of mutos scuttled off into the darkness. The next thing the Doctor knew, his two friends were helping him to his feet. The Doctor greeted them in astonished delight. 'Sarah! Harry! I don't believe it. I thought you'd been blown up in the Kaled City!'

'We never got there,' explained Sarah. 'Halfway across the Wastelands we were attacked by a band of wandering mutos. While we were fighting them off the rocket blew up the Kaled city.'

'You could see the flames clear across the Wastelands,' Harry said. 'The poor old mutos were so scared they just ran for their lives.'

The Doctor shook his head wonderingly. 'Then what are you all doing here?'

Harry grinned. 'We knew you'd try to get back into the Bunker through the cave. We came to help.'

'Must you really go back?' Sarah asked.

'I must, Sarah. There's still a chance I'll manage to complete my mission. What's more, there's another very good reason.'

'To recover the Time Ring?'

'That bracelet the Time Lord gave me is our life-line. Without it, we'll never get away from this planet.'

That was reason enough to convince even Sarah. They made their way out of the trench, across more Wastelands, until they reached the window in the rock wall through which they'd emerged earlier.

The Doctor moved aside the broken bars and helped Harry through. Sevrin was about to follow when the Doctor laid a hand on his arm. 'Will you do something for us, Sevrin – something important?'

'If I can,' Sevrin spoke in his deep gentle voice.

'Over in the Thal city there's a girl called Bettan. She's trying to organise a resistance group. Will you round up any of your people who can fight, and join her? She's going to stage an attack on the main gate of the Bunker. The attack probably won't succeed, but it will keep the Elite troops occupied while I try to complete my mission.'

'Very well, Doctor. I will do what I can.'

Sarah took one of Sevrin's hands in both of hers. 'Good-bye, Sevrin and thank you.' The muto slipped away into the darkness. The Doctor helped Sarah through the gap and climbed through after her. Harry was waiting on the other side.

'We'd better stay close together, Sarah,' warned the Doctor. 'This cave is full of Davros's rejected experiments.'

Sarah shivered. 'Did you have to tell me that?'

Harry chuckled 'Not scared, are you, Sarah?'

'Of course not!'

'Well you should be,' said the Doctor severely. 'One of them nearly had Harry for lunch!' With these consoling words the Doctor moved off into the darkness, Sarah and Harry following close behind.

The Doctor's Time Ring lay still unnoticed on Ronson's desk. No one was particularly interested in odds and ends taken from some mysterious alien, and the desk had been left undisturbed since its owner's death.

The plump communications scientist called Kavell was working at his own desk nearby, when Gharman, Davros's chief assistant, came over to him. He cast a quick glance at the Elite guards on the door, and held up a piece of electronic circuitry. 'I'm having a problem with the dimensional thought circuit,' he said loudly. 'I wonder if you'd have a look at it.' Kavell looked up in surprise. The problem was completely out of his area. He was about to say so when Gharman whispered, 'Kavell we've got to stop the Daleks!'

Kavell took the circuit and pretended to examine it. 'I want no part of it, Gharman. You saw what happened to Ronson. Davros will have us killed too, if he thinks we're plotting against him.'

'If we plan carefully he won't suspect.'

Kavell nodded towards the guard. 'What about the Elite Security Guards they'll stay loyal to Davros.'

'That isn't important not if the whole of the Scientific Corps turns against him. We can demand that the Dalek project is halted. Every day I become more convinced that this whole project is evil and immoral. These latest genetic changes – '

'What do you expect me to do,' whispered Kavell. He had no wish to prolong the conversation.

'Spread the word. Help me to convince the others that it's vital the whole Dalek project is ended.'

'I'll do what I can. I promise nothing – '

Kavell broke off short as Nyder came into the laboratory. Gharman snatched back his equipment and returned to his place. Kavell bent over his papers, working furiously.

Nyder seemed to have noticed nothing. He had a brief discussion about security matters with the guard on the door, then walked back to his own cubicle. As he sat behind his meticulously tidy desk Nyder's mind was

working furiously. He could very easily guess the kind of conversation Kavell and Gharman had been having. The only question in his mind was – what should he do about it?

Some time later, Nyder came back into the laboratory. Kavell was no longer there, but Gharman was still working at his desk. Nyder walked across to him. 'Gharman, I must talk to you. It's very important.'

Gharman didn't look up. 'You can see I'm busy. . . .'

'Then soon,' insisted Nyder. 'Not here, somewhere private.'

Gharman looked up curiously. There was strain in Nyder's voice. 'What's all this about, Commander?'

Nyder seemed to be groping for words. 'Look, Gharman, you know me . . . I've served Davros faithfully for years, just as you have. I've never questioned anything he's done until now?'

'Go on,' said Gharman cautiously.

'He's become a megalomaniac. He's ready to sacrifice all of us just so his Dalek project can be completed.'

Gharman felt a sudden exultation. If even Nyder was coming round to his way of thinking. . . . With him on their side victory was certain. 'Don't worry, Commander,' he said reassuringly. 'You're not alone in your fears. Where can we talk safely?'

Nyder answered thoughtfully, 'There's the detention area on the lower level. Davros never goes there. We could use one of the cells.'

'Very well. I'll meet you down there as soon as I can.' Gharman bent over his papers, and Nyder walked quietly away.

Deep beneath the Bunker, Sarah held Harry's hand as she walked through the dank and dripping darkness of the caves. She kept her eyes tight shut most of the time. Various unpleasant hissings and gruntings came from all around, and Sarah had no wish to see what was making them. Harry's other hand was gripping the end of the Doctor's scarf, as the Doctor led them unerringly through the darkness. At least Harry *hoped* it was unerringly. . . .

'Not much further,' whispered the Doctor. 'The entrance to the ventilation duct is just along here.'

Harry stopped and looked around. 'Are you *sure*, Doctor? I don't remember passing this little lot.' A colony of the giant clam creatures was clustered by the cave wall. They gave them a wide berth, but Harry couldn't resist giving the nearest one a passing kick a gesture instantly regretted as the creature slid towards him, hissing loudly and jaws gaping wide.

Sarah screamed and backed away – straight towards the opening shell of another clam which gaped eagerly to receive her. . . .

The Doctor pulled her to one side just as the clam-shell clanged shut. Harry jumped away from his clam, and all three ran off into the darkness. The clams followed, hissing loudly, then suddenly subsided, waiting for another victim to pass by. Sarah shuddered. 'I'll never eat oysters again.'

'Lucky for us they're not very mobile,' said the Doctor. 'Maybe that's why Davros discarded them. Well – we've arrived.' He pointed to an opening in the cave wall the other end of the ventilation duct.

Nervously Sarah said, 'Doctor, suppose there's something nasty waiting for us in there?'

'That's a thought,' the Doctor said cheerfully. 'Tell you what, we'll send Harry in first.'

Harry grinned, knowing full well that if the Doctor had suspected danger, he'd have gone in first himself. Harry crawled into the tunnel, then turned and helped Sarah to follow him. The Doctor took a last look round the cave

and climbed after them. Harry in the lead, they began working their way down the narrow tunnel.

When Gharman reached the lower level, he found Nyder waiting for him. Without saying a word Nyder led the way through the detention area and into an empty cell.

In a low voice Gharman began, 'We'd better make this as quick as possible. We don't want to be missed.'

Nyder said, 'Tell me your plan.'

'Quite a number of scientists feel as we do. When we've collected enough support, we can give Davros an ultimatum.'

'What kind of ultimatum do you suggest?'

Gharman had worked it out in his mind. 'We shall only continue work on the Daleks if he restores *conscience* to the brain-pattern. The creatures *must* have a moral sense, the ability to judge between right and wrong ... all the qualities that we believe essential in ourselves.'

Nyder nodded thoughtfully. 'And if he doesn't accept this ultimatum?'

'We will destroy all the work that has been done so far everything! It will be as though the Daleks had never been created!'

'Excellent,' Nyder said crisply. 'I shall do my best to get some of the Security Corps on our side.' Casually he asked, 'Who can you count on among the scientists?'

Gharman considered. 'Kavell to begin with. Frenton, Parran, possibly Shonar. . . .' He reeled off about a dozen names. 'All those have already been sounded out, and there are plenty of other likely ones we haven't spoken to as yet. . . .'

'Thank you, Gharman. That is exactly what I needed to know.'

Gharman stared at him. There had been a sudden change in Nyder's tone. Then Gharman heard an all-too-familiar whirring sound. Davros was coming through the cell door, a squad of security men behind him. 'Davros will be most interested in your information,' added Nyder coldly.

Gharman stared round wildly. He was trapped in the little cell. There was nowhere to run. In a sudden frenzy he launched himself at Nyder, who sidestepped neatly and dropped him with one short chopping blow. Gharman collapsed in front of Davros's chair. Davros looked down at the sprawled body. 'A pity. He had a good scientific mind.'

Nyder drew his blaster. 'Shall I kill him?' he asked mildly.

'No. A little brain surgery will remove these stupid scruples, and we shall still have the benefit of his inventive skills.'

Nyder holstered his blaster regretfully. 'And the people he named?'

'The same for them.'

'I'll arrange for the arrests.'

'Not yet. We must move carefully. First we must learn exactly who are our allies, and who our enemies.'

Nyder snapped his fingers and a couple of security guards dragged Gharman away. Nyder was about to follow when he saw that Davros had not moved. 'What is it?'

'I heard something in there.' Davros's withered hand gestured towards a tiny ventilation duct high in the cell wall.

Nyder could hear nothing. But he knew that Davros's electronically-boosted hearing was far better than his own. He put his ear close to the little grille. Was there something ... a faint scuffling sound? 'I think there's someone in the ventilation system,' he whispered.

Harry pushed aside the already-loosened hatch-cover and slithered out.

'Everything's quiet, Doctor,' he called, looking along the little tunnel. He helped Sarah out, and then the Doctor jumped down. Harry was just about to replace the hatch-cover when a dazzling spotlight illuminated the three of them. Behind it the Doctor could make out Davros, Nyder and a squad of black-uniformed security guards.

'Welcome back, Doctor,' said Davros.

The Doctor sighed, and turned to Sarah. 'There *was* something nasty waiting for us after all.'

The security squad marched the three captives to a room in the detention area. Various oddly-shaped pieces of electronic equipment lined the walls. There was something indescribably sinister about the place. The Doctor guessed the room was a kind of electronic interrogation chamber. Its equipment was designed to loosen the tongues of those unwilling to speak, and to check the truth of their stories.

The guards worked swiftly and efficiently. The Doctor was strapped into a metal chair, heavy straps holding his wrists and ankles. A metal helmet was lowered over the top of his head. He assumed that the contraption was some kind of lie-detector. What worried him far more was to see Sarah and Harry strapped to metal tables. These had clamps at each corner, holding the prisoners helpless. Electrodes were taped to their temples. Leads from the two tables were plugged into the control-console on the arm of Davros's chair.

Their work finished, the security men stood back. Davros wheeled his chair directly in front of the Doctor. Nyder, as always, was at his master's shoulder. There was a recording machine on Davros's other side.

Davros was leafing through a sheaf of computer print outs. 'I have read the reports of your initial interrogation. The suggestion that you had travelled through Space and Time was rejected by the computer.'

The Doctor shrugged. 'Computers are limited. It had probably never been programmed for such a concept.'

'Such travel is beyond my scientific comprehension,' stated Davros. 'But not beyond my imagination. Why did you come here, from this future of yours?'

The Doctor saw no point in evasion. 'To stop the development of the Daleks. In what is to you the future, I have seen the carnage and destruction they will create.'

'So – my Daleks do survive?'

'As machines of war, weapons of hate.' The Doctor leaned forward, straining against his bonds in his urgency. 'There is still time to change that. You could make them a force for good in the Universe.'

'You have seen my Daleks in battle?' Davros demanded. 'Do they win? Do they always win?'

'They have been defeated many times – but never utterly. The Dalek menace always returns.'

'If they are the supreme war-machine, how *can* they lose?'

'Many reasons. Overwhelming opposition, poor information, simple misfortune. . . .'

'You must tell me, Doctor. Where do the Daleks fail? What mistakes do they make?'

The Doctor shook his head. 'No, Davros. That is something the future must keep secret.'

Davros glided his wheelchair closer to the Doctor. 'You *will* tell me what I want to know because you have weaknesses. Ones that I have eliminated from myself, and from my Daleks. You are afflicted with a conscience, Doctor, and with compassion for others.'

The Doctor said nothing.

Davros went on remorselessly, 'Let me tell you what is going to happen, Doctor. You will answer all my questions, carefully and precisely. The instruments to which you are attached will instantly detect any attempt to lie.'

'And if I refuse to answer?'

'Your friends are attached to rather different instruments, Doctor.' Davros waved a hand towards Harry and Sarah. 'At the touch of a switch I can make them feel all the torments and agonies ever known.'

The Doctor's voice was hoarse with strain. 'If I tell you what you want to know, I betray the future. I can't do that.'

'You can and you will, Doctor,' said Davros gloatingly. 'You will tell me the reason for every Dalek defeat. With that knowledge I can programme my Daleks so there will be no errors, and no defeats. We shall change the future.'

The Doctor looked from Davros to Harry and Sarah. It was the most agonising decision he had ever had to face. Davros was becoming impatient. 'Doctor! Either tell me about the Dalek future, or watch the suffering of your friends. Which is it to be?'

Slowly Davros moved his withered hand towards the switch. . . .

## 9 Rebellion!

The Doctor knew he was beaten – at least for the time being. 'All right, Davros, all right. Just leave my friends alone.'

Davros kept his hand poised over the control. 'Then begin, Doctor.'

The Doctor paused, collecting his thoughts. In a flat, hopeless voice he began a catalogue of Dalek defeats, and the errors which had caused them. 'The Dalek invasion of Earth in the year Two Thousand was foiled because of an over-ambitious attempt to mine the core of the planet. The magnetic core of the planet was too strong, the human resistance too determined. On Mars the Daleks were finally defeated because of a virus which attacked the insulation cables of their electrical circuits. The Dalek war against the Venusian Colonies in the Space Year Seventeen Thousand was ended by the intervention of a rocket-fleet from the planet Hyperion. . . .'

The Doctor talked till he was hoarse, dredging every possible scrap of Dalek history from his memory. At last his head slumped on his chest and he mumbled. 'That's all all I can remember for now.' At the same moment the tape-machine clicked to a halt, its recording spool exhausted.

Davros nodded slowly. 'This seems an opportune moment to end this particular session. We can always resume later, under the same conditions. Commander Nyder, take the Doctor's two friends to the detention cell.'

Security guards unstrapped Sarah and Harry, lifted them down from the tables and dragged them away. The Doctor too was unstrapped from his chair. He slumped back exhausted. As the guards came to fetch him, Davros waved them away. 'I must thank you, Doctor. All this information will be programmed into the Dalek memory banks ' Davros slipped the tape-spool from the machine and handed it to Nyder. 'Commander, you will place this in the safe in my office. Its security is your personal responsibility Remember, its value is beyond computation.' The Doctor's eyes followed the tape longingly as Nyder put it inside his tunic and left the room. He and Davros were alone now, though the Doctor guessed there would be more guards outside. He let himself slump deeper in the chair, doing his best to give the impression of utter defeat. But in his heart, or rather hearts, the Doctor was

far from giving in. Characteristically, the Doctor wasted no time in regrets.

With his enemy broken and defeated, Davros was in a relaxed, almost genial mood. 'Now, Doctor,' he said, 'let us talk for a while, not as prisoner and captive, but as men of science. It is seldom that I meet someone whose intelligence even approaches my own. . . .'

Sarah and Harry were marched along the corridor to a guarded cell and thrown inside. A tall, thin man in the uniform of one of Davros's Scientific Elite was stretched out on the bunk. He jumped to his feet and helped them to pick themselves up. 'Are you all right?' he asked anxiously.

'Just about,' said Sarah.

The man looked at Harry more closely. 'Forgive me, but aren't you one of the prisoners who escaped?'

Harry nodded. 'That's right. Who are you?'

'Until a little while ago I was a senior member of Davros's Scientific Elite. My name is Gharman.'

'And now you're a prisoner like us?' asked Sarah. 'What happened?'

Gharman told them of his attempt to rally the opposition to Davros, and his mistake in trusting Nyder. 'What's happening up there? I suppose the whole place is in an uproar.'

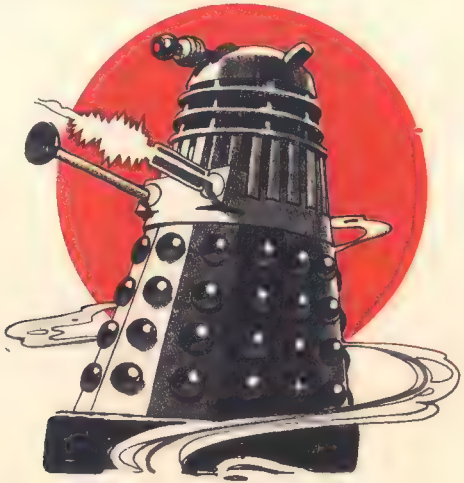
'We didn't get a chance to see very much,' said Harry. 'But as far as I could tell, everything seems to be running smoothly.'

Gharman began pacing about the cell. 'Yet Davros knows we're planning action against him. I should have expected mass arrests, executions. . . .'

'Maybe that's too obvious for Davros?' suggested Sarah.

Gharman looked at her hopefully. 'He's being too clever for his own good. Every moment he delays our movement grows in strength. A *majority* of the scientists now want to end the Daleks. If they act now, they could break Davros's strength.' Gharman pounded his fist against the wall in an agony of frustration. 'If only I could get in touch with them.'

In the corridor outside, the plump little communications scientist, Kavell, was walking towards the cell door. The guard covered him with his rifle. 'Halt!'



Kavell glared back indignantly. 'I wish to question the prisoners.'

'No one may see the prisoners without a pass signed by Davros.'

'I'm aware of that. I have one here somewhere. . . .' Kavell moved closer to the guard, his fingers reaching for the truncheon concealed inside his tunic. . . .

Davros was still enjoying the spectacle of the Doctor's defeat. His prisoner's will seemed completely broken and he slumped dejectedly in his chair. 'I have committed the greatest act of treachery ever perpetrated,' groaned the Doctor. 'I have betrayed the unborn millions. Davros, I beg of you, stop the production of the Daleks.'

'Too late, Doctor. My automated workshops are already in full production of Dalek machines.'

The Doctor abandoned any faint hope he might have had of reasoning with Davros. He knew he was looking upon the face of utter madness. In one swift movement he sprang from his chair and grasped Davros's single wrist. 'Release me,' croaked the metallic voice.

The Doctor ignored him. With his free hand he reached for the row of controls on Davros's chair-arm. 'I imagine these switches control your life-support system. How long would you survive if I turned them off? Answer me, Davros!'

'Less than thirty seconds.'

The Doctor moved his hand closer to the switches. 'Order the complete close-down of the Dalek incubator section.'

'Destroy the Daleks? Never!'

With one sweep of his hand, the Doctor flicked an entire row of switches into the 'off' position. The body of Davros slumped forward, like a puppet whose strings have been cut. The Doctor waited a few seconds, then turned the switches on again. Eerily, Davros jerked back into life. When he was sure Davros could hear him the Doctor said, 'Next time I press those switches, they stay pressed. I mean it, Davros. Now give the order!'

The lens in the centre of Davros's forehead seemed to glare at the Doctor. 'Even if I obey, there will be no escape for you.'

'That isn't important.'

Davros realised the Doctor was sincere. Tonelessly he said, 'Press the communicator switch the red one at the end.' The Doctor did so. Leaning forward to a built-in microphone, Davros said, 'Davros to Elite Unit Seven. All survival maintenance systems are to be closed down. The Dalek creatures are to be destroyed.'

'Tell them the order is final and cannot be countermanded,' said the Doctor urgently. Davros hesitated. 'Tell them!' The Doctor's hand hovered over the switches.

Reluctantly Davros began. 'This order cannot . . .' Intent on his battle of wills with Davros, the Doctor realised too late that someone had entered the room. Nyder's truncheon took him across the back of the neck and he pitched to the floor. Again Davros leaned forward, almost gabbling in his haste. 'This is Davros. My last order is cancelled, repeat cancelled. No action is to be taken.' He sat back with a sigh of relief.

Nyder prodded the Doctor's body with the toe of one polished jackboot. 'What shall I do with him? It would be safest to kill him now.'

'Not yet. He still has knowledge that is vital to our future success. I shall wrench every last detail of it from his mind and then he dies! Now, what of our rebellious scientists? How are they progressing?'

'Feeling against you is rising fast. Many of the Scientific Elite speak openly

against you since the destruction of the city. Now some of the military are joining them.'

'It is as I expected.'

Nyder's face showed that he did not share his leader's calm. 'The rebels already outnumber those still loyal to you. Let me take a squad of Elite Guards to deal with them. I could wipe out their leaders in an hour.'

'You think like a soldier, Nyder. Rebellion is an idea. Suppress it too soon and it hides away and festers, bursting out elsewhere. My way is best.'

'As you wish.' Nyder hauled the semi-conscious Doctor to his feet. 'I'll take this one to the detention cell myself.' He kicked the Doctor brutally with his boot, 'Come on, you – move!'

Davros leaned towards his microphone. 'All Dalek Units. All Dalek Units. This is Davros. . . .'

The Daleks swept through the burning Thal city killing all before them. As a party of them shot down some fleeing Thals another Dalek glided into sight

'Davros has commanded all Dalek units to disengage and return to the Bunker immediately.'

'We obey.'

The Daleks spun round and glided towards the city gates.

Just outside the city the girl Bettan and a ragged group of Thals crouched in a trench, watching their city burn. Bettan tensed, 'Quiet, there's something moving out there.'

The giant cloaked shape of a muto appeared over the edge of the trench. Bettan raised her rifle but a deep voice rumbled. 'No, do not shoot. I am a friend.'

The muto jumped into the trench, hands stretched out appealingly. 'You are the Thal girl called Bettan?'

'That's right. How did you know?'

'My name is Sevrin. The Doctor sent me to find you He asked me to raise a band of my people to help you.'

'Well - where are they?'

Sevrin bowed his head. 'My people will not fight. The old hatreds are deep.'

Bettan nodded unsurprised. 'Then we'll have to manage alone.'

Sevrin looked at the tattered little group. They were a mixture of soldiers and civilians, clutching a motley assortment of weapons. 'This is all of you?'

'All I could find alive,' Bettan said simply. 'I covered most of the city. We managed to raid the armoury, though. We've got plenty of arms and ammunition. Explosives too.' Sevrin saw that some of the Thals were clutching bombs and packs of explosives.

'You plan to attack the Bunker, with so few?' he asked doubtfully.

'Why not? At least we can die fighting.'

'Then I will help you,' Sevrin added determinedly. 'I am not afraid to fight.'

'Well, there's no point in delay.' Bettan began rousing her small group. 'Come on – it's time to move out!'

Nyder half-dragged, half-carried the semi-conscious Doctor towards the detention cell. He was pleased to see that the guard on the cell was alert. As soon as the guard saw Nyder approaching with his prisoner he turned to unlock the cell door. The door swung open and the guard turned round. Only then did Nyder realise that the 'guard' was Harry Sullivan.

Immediately Nyder threw the sagging Doctor at Harry and sprinted off down the corridor. Harry caught the Doctor, who was rapidly coming to, and led him into the cell. 'Things didn't go quite as planned,' he said apologetically.

Shaking his head to clear it, the Doctor saw that the cell held Sarah and two members of Davros's Scientific Elite. On the bunk was a guard, stripped of his uniform and bound and gagged with torn-up blankets.

Sarah helped the Doctor to sit down. 'He's still a bit groggy,' Harry said.

Sarah saw the Doctor looking at the two scientists. 'They're called Kavell and Gharman,' she explained. 'Kavell helped us escape. He and Gharman are leading the opposition to Davros.'

Gharman started to leave the cell. 'Come on, Kavell, we've a lot to do. We must act quickly. . . .'

'Wait,' said the Doctor. 'I think Davros knows about you. Just as I was coming to, I heard him talking to Nyder.'

'Then why hasn't he taken more action against us?'

'Perhaps he doesn't care?' suggested Kavell. Knocking out the guard had given him new confidence. 'Davros knows we are too many for him.'

The Doctor shook his head, then winced as a stab of pain shot through it. 'I think he has some trap ready for you. Be careful.'

Gharman too seemed to be filled with confidence. 'Thanks for the warning, Doctor, I think we can take care of Davros.'

'That's right,' agreed Kavell. 'We're too many for him now.'

Eagerly the two scientists bustled out of the cell, hurrying off to rally their fellow conspirators.

The Doctor sat for a moment, head in his hands. He was summoning all the powers of his resilient Time Lord body to overcome the effects of his recent

blow. Suddenly he rose and stretched, apparently as good as new. Sarah looked dubiously at him. 'I suppose it's no good telling you to rest for a while?'

'No, it isn't. For one thing this place isn't safe. For another, there's too much to be done. First, we've got to recover that Time Ring. Remember, we'll never get off this planet without it. Second, I *must* find and destroy that tape Davros made. The knowledge it holds could make the Daleks totally invincible.'

Full of his old determination the Doctor led Harry and Sarah from the cell.

Outside the Bunker armoury two of Nyder's Security Elite stood on watch, immaculate in their black uniforms. A head popped round the corner of a nearby corridor, and then popped back. It was Gharman, two more scientists behind him.

Chatting idly among themselves, the scientists strolled round the corner. The guards paid no particular attention as they drew level. Suddenly Gharman drew a hidden pistol and jammed it into the nearest guard's ribs. The second guard reacted instantly. Grabbing the nearest scientist as a shield, he hurled him into Gharman, who was knocked to the floor. Raising his rifle, the guard shot down another scientist, then crumpled and fell himself as Gharman fired from the floor. By now the surviving scientist had produced a gun, and disarmed the remaining guard. Gharman got to his feet, looking at the two bodies. 'A stupid waste of life,' he said sadly. 'Our intention is to make a bloodless revolution.' He waved towards the captured guard. 'Take him away and lock him up with the others. Get his keys first.'

Gharman unlocked the armoury door and they went inside. The plain metal room was lined with racks of weapons, and shelves holding detonators and explosives. Gharman turned to the scientist. 'Take as many weapons as you can carry and pass them out to our people.' At that moment Kavell hurried into the armoury.

'Well done, Gharman!' Before Gharman could reply the little man went on excitedly, 'They're coming over to our side in droves. Security Guards too. We have the backing of at least eighty per cent of those in the Bunker. We're winning, Gharman, we're winning. . . .'

Gharman took a rifle from the rack and passed it to Kavell. He took another for himself. Holding the unaccustomed weapon awkwardly, he made for the door. 'Very well,' he said. 'Let's finish it off. . . .'

In the huge emptiness of the main laboratory, Davros sat alone in his chair. From the corridors all round, he heard the sounds of shooting, the bustle of running feet, even the occasional burst of cheering. Davros showed no reaction. He just sat there, silently, waiting, a faint smile on the thin, lipless mouth. . . . Slowly the fingers of his one withered hand began drumming on the arm of the chair.

## 10 Decision for the Doctor

Nyder ran into the laboratory, blaster in hand. His uniform was dishevelled, and his usual cold manner replaced by an air of terror. 'Davros, they're taking over. Soon they'll be in total control. *Everyone's* turned against us, even men I thought I could trust. . . .'

Davros didn't answer. The only sound was the drumming of his fingers.

Nyder's voice rose in panic. 'Listen, I've got a squad of men in section nine. If I order them into action now, they might stay loyal. Davros. . . .'

The metallic voice was so quiet as to be almost inaudible. 'I hear you, Nyder.'

'Then tell me what to do!' Nyder had grown so used to the support of Davros that without it he felt lost and abandoned.

'Find their leaders. Hand over your weapons to them. Order all members of your Security Guard to do the same. Tell the rebel leaders that *I* have given these orders to avoid bloodshed. Tell them I will submit to their demands.'

Nyder shook his head incredulously. 'We admit we're beaten? We simply surrender?'

'That is what they will believe.'

The evasiveness of his answer gave Nyder new hope. 'You mean to —'

Davros interrupted him. 'Nyder! You and the rebels – will find out what I mean in good time. Now carry out my orders.'

The route followed by the Doctor and his friends took them past the armoury. The doors gaped open, and Harry couldn't resist taking a look inside. 'Hang on, Doctor. This might come in handy.'

They followed him into the armoury. There were still plenty of weapons on the shelves. Harry grabbed a rifle for himself and offered one to the Doctor. The Doctor shook his head absentmindedly and began hunting around the wall cupboards. Sarah saw that he was filling his pockets with small waxed cartons, spools of wire, and a variety of other objects. 'That's explosive, isn't it, Doctor?' she asked.

'Explosives and detonators,' agreed the Doctor. 'Seems almost providential.'

'What are you going to use it for?'

The Doctor sighed. 'The Time Lords gave me three options. Discover the Daleks' weakness – if they have one. Alter their genetic development, so they become less evil. Or destroy them entirely. Now only the last option is still open.' As the Doctor looked down at her, Sarah was surprised to see the sadness in his eyes. 'I'm going to kill everything in that incubator room. I'm going to destroy the Daleks for ever.'

Davros sat silently in the empty laboratory. Nyder entered, still under strain, but calmer now. 'Everything has been done as you ordered. They are on their way.'

Davros nodded, but said nothing. Nyder took up his usual position behind Davros's chair. A few minutes later Kavell and Gharman entered. They made a strangely incongruous picture, one short and plump, the other tall and thin. Davros spoke. 'You have something to say to me?'

Hesitantly Gharman stepped forward. He knew that he had won, that Davros was in his power, yet the habit of years made his voice respectful. 'Davros, no one questions that under your guidance we have made incredible progress...'

Ruthlessly Davros interrupted. 'You did not come here to flatter me. You came to deliver an ultimatum. Do so.'

'Very well. Initially the Dalek was intended as a life-support system for the creature into which we Kaleds must ultimately evolve. However we feel the concept has been perverted. You have tampered with the genetic structure of your forced mutations to create a ruthless power for evil. This must not continue.'

'What do you suggest?'

'All work on the Daleks will cease immediately. Those created so far will be destroyed. If you agree to these terms we shall be proud to work under your

guidance on the rebuilding of our society.'

'And if I refuse?'

Gharman's voice hardened. 'The Daleks will still be destroyed. You will be imprisoned, and we shall continue under a democratically elected leader.' Davros was silent. After a moment Gharman said nervously, 'Well?'

'At least do me the courtesy of allowing me time to consider.' Davros spun his chair and wheeled it to the other end of the laboratory. Gharman and Kavell looked nervously at each other, wondering how they had lost the initiative. After a long and agonising pause, Davros wheeled his chair back to them. 'I have made my decision. I will accept your ultimatum – on condition that I am first allowed to speak to a full meeting of the Elite, both Scientific and Security. When I have finished, a vote will be taken. I will abide by the decision of the majority.' Taken aback, the two delegates said nothing. 'Well?' snapped Davros. 'Do you agree? You wish to be "democratic", do you not?'

Gharman looked at Kavell, who shrugged. Both knew that ninety per cent of those in the Bunker were now against Davros. What harm could it do to let a once-honoured leader save his face? 'Very well,' Gharman said. 'It is agreed.'

Davros retained control till the last. 'The meeting will take place immediately. Arrange it. You may go now.' Dismissed, Gharman and Kavell turned and left. Once they were out of the room, Davros spun his chair to face Nyder. There was fierce exultation in the metallic voice. 'Victory is ours, Nyder. Democracy, freedom, fairness....' Davros spat out the words like oaths. 'Achievement comes through power, and power through strength. *They have lost!*'

Concealed in a trench outside the Bunker, Bettan and her small force crouched in hiding. Outside the trench a long line of Daleks was sweeping past. Bettan looked up as they disappeared from sight. 'The blockhouse is just over the next rise. That's where they must be heading.'

Sevrin tapped her on the shoulder. 'Keep down. There are more coming.'

Another line of Daleks glided by. When they were gone Sevrin said, 'Will you still attack the Bunker now the Daleks are back?'

Bettan nodded slowly. 'Why not? Davros and his Daleks will soon be inside the Bunker together. We're going to make sure they stay there for ever!'

The Doctor, Harry and Sarah stood outside the heavy door with its glass viewing panel the door to which Ronson had earlier brought the Doctor. The Doctor slid back the panel-cover and a greenish light spilled over his face. 'Are there really Daleks in there?' asked Sarah.

'The flesh and blood part of them if indeed it is still flesh-and-blood after Davros's genetic tampering.' He began busying himself with detonatory explosives and coils of wire. Harry plucked up courage and looked through the panel.

Morbid curiosity made Sarah ask, 'What do they look like?'

Harry peered through the panel. 'They seem to be in different stages of development. Some are in jars and tanks ... others seem to be able to move around. Maybe they're fully grown ones....'

The Doctor, his preparations completed, passed Harry a large spool of wire. 'Pay this out to me slowly, will you?' He put his hand on the door.

'You're not going in there, Doctor?' asked Sarah.

'Only for a moment. The creatures are harmless – I think. Just rather unpleasant....'

Harry braced himself. 'Do you want me to come in with you?'

To his relief the Doctor said, 'No need, Harry. It's just a matter of setting the charges where they'll do most damage. Shouldn't take long.' Unwinding wire from Harry's spool as he went along, the Doctor disappeared inside the Incubator Room.

After a time the tugging on the spool stopped. Evidently the Doctor had all the wire he needed. Nothing happened for quite a long time. All they could do was wait.

Inside the Incubator Room, the Doctor bent his head over his work, paying no attention to the horrors all around him. Greenish light from the tanks filled the room. Inside those tanks ghastly-shaped creatures twisted and writhed in agitation, while in the darker corners of the room other monstrosities cowered away timidly. The Doctor moved from place to place, planting packets of explosives, connecting his central wire to the terminal on each packet. He didn't notice that out of the darkness something shapeless was oozing across the floor towards him....

In the corridor Sarah looked worriedly at Harry. 'What's taking him so long?'

'It's a pretty delicate job, planting explosives.'

'Well he *should* be finished by now. I'm going to take a look.' A choking cry from inside the room sent them running through the door. In the dim green light, they could see the Doctor swaying wildly. Something like a coating of live black tar was covering his legs, flowing steadily upwards as if to engulf him....

'Harry, help me,' yelled Sarah. She dashed into the room and grabbed one of the Doctor's arms. Harry grabbed the other, and they heaved him free of the pool of black liquid, which let go its grip with an ugly squelching sound. All three stumbled out of the room, and Harry slammed the door behind them.

Sarah shuddered. 'What was that awful stuff?'

'Some kind of nutrient, I think. Seemed almost alive, didn't it?' The Doctor had held on to the wire which was now running under the door. For want of a knife, he bit through the wire with his teeth and began peeling back the protective plastic coating, revealing the gleaming metal underneath. Then he peeled off another length of wire, bared both ends and looked round for a power-source. A wall-light glowed dimly nearby. In a moment the Doctor had dismantled it, and fixed one end of his wire to its inner workings, sucking his fingers as blue sparks shot out. Holding the wire from the light in one hand, the wire from under the door in the other, the Doctor said, 'All I have to do is touch *this* wire to this one, and the explosives will go off.'

Sarah spoke impatiently, 'Then what are you waiting for?'

'Do I have the right?' said the Doctor simply.

Sarah was astonished. 'To destroy the Daleks? How can you possibly doubt it? You know what they'll become.'

In an agonised voice the Doctor tried to explain. 'It isn't so simple, Sarah. The evil of the Daleks produced counter-reactions of good. Many future worlds will stop warring among themselves, join in alliance to fight the Daleks.' Sarah looked at him, unable to believe that the Doctor was held up by ethical scruples at a time like this. But the Doctor was perfectly serious. To him the moral issue was real and vital. 'Suppose somebody who knew the future told you a certain child would grow up to be an evil dictator – could you then destroy that child?'

Sarah made a last attempt to talk sense into him. 'We're not talking about some imaginary child, Doctor, we're talking about the Daleks. The most evil creatures ever created. Complete your mission and destroy them. You *must*!'

The Doctor stared at the gleaming wires as though mesmerised 'I simply have to touch *this* to *this* and generations of people might live without fear, never hearing the word "Dalek".'

'Then do it,' urged Sarah. 'Suppose it was a question of wiping out the bacteria that caused some terrible disease. You wouldn't hesitate then, would you?'

The Doctor looked at her solemnly. 'But if I wipe out a whole intelligent life-form, I'll be no better than the Daleks myself.' In an agony of indecision, the Doctor repeated his question. 'I could destroy the Daleks, here and now. But do I have the right?'

## 11 The Triumph of the Daleks

They were never to know how the Doctor would have resolved his moral dilemma. A shout from the other end of the corridor interrupted them. They turned to see Gharman running towards them his face alight with triumph 'Doctor, I've been looking for you. We've won! Davros has submitted to all our terms!'

'Davros surrendered? Just like that?'

Gharman waved a dismissive hand. 'He is trying to save face, of course. He asked to be allowed to speak to a full meeting of the Elite. But that's no more than a formality. The voting will be a landslide against him.'

The Doctor took the wire projecting beneath the door and gave a sudden heave. Somewhere inside the room the wire snapped. The Doctor reeled it in until the broken end came from under the door. 'Gharman, I'm more grateful than you'll ever know. You've saved me from the most terrible decision of my life.'

Gharman was too excited to listen to him. 'The meeting is just about to begin, Doctor. I wanted you to be there. Will you come?' Taking the Doctor's assent for granted, he led the way back down the corridor.

'With the greatest of pleasure.'

The Doctor followed the eager Gharman, and Sarah and Harry hurried after them. At the back of her mind, Sarah was wishing Gharman had arrived a moment later. The Doctor might have decided to set off those explosives after all....

The big central laboratory was an impressive sight. Every scientist and security man in the Bunker had somehow managed to squeeze inside. They were all tightly packed on one side of the room. On the other Davros sat alone in his chair, Nyder by his side. The Doctor, Harry and Sarah watched from a position by one of the doors. Gharman stood at the front of the crowd, opposite Davros. 'Everyone is here, Davros,' he said. 'We are waiting to hear whatever you have to say.'

Davros began to speak. He described his years of struggle to develop the travel machine that would protect the creatures into which their race must evolve, of his desire that when the war was over, his own race should stand supreme. The assembled crowd listened in courteous silence, but it was clear that his words had no appeal for them. At long last the Kaleds were sickened of war and slaughter. They wanted no part of Davros's dreams of conquest.

Satisfied that the vote against Davros would indeed be a landslide, the Doctor whispered to Sarah and Harry, 'Let's get the Time Ring while they're all occupied.'

They began working their way round the edge of the crowd towards the corner desk that had once been Rotarion's. Progress was slow, since the crowd

was densely packed. All the while they heard Davros droning on. By now the crowd was shuffling restlessly, impatient for him to end. 'At this very moment,' Davros was saying, 'the production lines stand ready in the workshops, on the lower levels. They are totally automated, fully programmed. The Daleks no longer depend on us – they are a power in their own right. Would you end everything we have achieved together?'

The Doctor and his friends reached Ronson's desk at last. The Doctor's possessions were still strewn on top of it, and he began stuffing them back in his pocket. But there was no sign of the Time Ring! Frantically they began to search.

Davros had wheeled his chair over to a control panel set into one wall, the crowd falling back before him. He pointed his withered hand at a large red button. 'This is a destruct button. Press it and you will destroy everything in the Bunker, outside of this room. You will destroy the Daleks, and with them the future of our race. Which of you will do it?' The crowd shuffled uneasily. Such was the dominance of Davros's personality that no one dared step forward. 'You are men without courage,' Davros spoke scornfully. 'You have lost the right to survive.'

Stung by the contempt in his voice, Gharman stepped forward to address the crowd. 'You have heard Davros's case. What he does not tell you is that there *is* another way – to destroy his conditioned, conscienceless creatures and allow our mutation to follow its natural course. Our race will survive – survive with all the strengths and weaknesses we have ourselves, not as an unfeeling and heartless monstrosity. That is our choice. Now it is time to decide.'

Most of this debate was lost on the Doctor and his friends, since they were frantically searching the area round the desk. It was Sarah who spotted the Time Ring at last. It had fallen from the desk and had been kicked by some careless foot until it was almost out of sight beneath a work-bench. Sarah wriggled underneath, scooped out the bracelet and handed it to the Doctor, who slipped it back on his arm with a sigh of relief. 'Bless you, Sarah. Now if we can only find that tape-recording and destroy it – we can all go home!'

Over the heads of the crowd they heard once more the voice of Davros. 'You have heard my case, and you have heard Gharman's. I will give you a few more minutes to decide. Then you must answer, not only to me, but to your future.'

Outside the blockhouse that led to the Bunker a small army of Daleks was grouped, silently waiting. Hidden in a trench nearby, Bettan, Sevrin and their little band looked on, wondering what was happening.

(In the centre of the laboratory, isolated amidst a largely-hostile crowd, Davros was also waiting. He glanced at a digital clock set in one wall. As the figures clicked up to record the passing of another time-unit, his finger stabbed down on one of the buttons on his console.)

The metal gates of the blockhouse slid smoothly open.

Bettan and Sevrin watched as the army of Daleks glided through. The inner gates opened, and the Daleks disappeared down the tunnel that led to the Bunker. No sooner were they out of sight than Bettan and her ragged band of commandos ran through the gates after them.

Bettan gave swift orders. 'Right. Set charges there ... there, and more there. Go as deep inside the tunnel as you can without being seen.' She turned to Sevrin. 'This is the only way into the Bunker?'

'It is now,' Sevrin said grimly. 'There was once a way in from the Kaled City, but your rocket buried that for ever.'

Bettan nodded satisfied. 'Then if we do the same to *this* entrance, we can

bury the Daleks with those who created them.' There was no pity in her voice. The slaughter and destruction she had seen in her own city were too fresh in her mind.

'But surely you will give the Doctor and his friends time to get clear?'

Bettan shook her head. 'I can't. I *must* blow the tunnel as soon as the charges are prepared. If anyone sees what we're doing, we're too few to fight them off.'

'How long?' asked Sevrin.

'Thirty minutes. Possibly less.'

'Then I must go inside and warn the Doctor.'

'That's very brave of you,' said Bettan. She hesitated. 'You understand, I *can't* delay things? If you're not back by the time we're ready. . . .'

'I understand,' said Sevrin. 'But I must try.'

Bettan nodded. 'Good luck. I hope you make it.' It was clear that she never expected to see him again. Swiftly and silently, Sevrin ran down the tunnel into the Bunker.

Sarah, Harry and the Doctor were waiting impatiently. 'How much longer?' asked Sarah.

'Not long,' whispered the Doctor. 'It's nearly time for the grand finale.' As yet he didn't realise the ghastly truth of his words.

Davros wheeled his chair to face the crowd. 'You have had ample time to decide. Let all those who are loyal to me and to the future of our race move forward to stand at my side.' The gap between Davros and the crowd seemed very large now. At first no one moved to cross it. At last one man moved. Then another. A handful more, and that was all. Davros looked round. 'No more?' he asked ironically 'Kravos, will you betray me? Fenatin my science saved your life. Do *you* turn against me?' The named men shuffled uneasily. But they did not move to join him.

The Doctor watched, almost with pity, as Davros appealed in vain to first one man then another. It was somehow degrading to see him plead. Why didn't the man just accept defeat?

Harry noticed that Nyder had edged away from Davros and was slipping out of the laboratory. He nudged the Doctor. 'Where do you think old Nyder's off to?'

The Doctor gave him a thoughtful look. A strong feeling of unease was creeping over him. Something about Davros's behaviour just didn't ring true, and Nyder's disappearing act made the feeling stronger. 'Let's find out,' he suggested. They slipped out of the laboratory after Nyder.

They followed him down one of the perimeter corridors that ran round the laboratory and up some steps, catching up with him along an upper corridor. At the sight of his unwelcome followers Nyder reached for a gun, but Harry tackled him hard, and sent him crashing half-stunned to the ground.

Nyder scrambled to his feet and started to run, but the the Doctor reached out a long arm to grab him. Harry joined in and there was a wild three-cornered fight which ended with Nyder disarmed and subdued. 'Now, where were you off to in such a hurry?' panted the Doctor.

Nyder shrugged. 'I was getting out while I could. Davros is finished that mean's I'm finished too.'

The Doctor shook his head. 'That doesn't quite ring true. Let's try something else. Where's Davros's office? I want the tape-recording you took away.'

Nyder said nothing. Harry grabbed him by the throat and shook him till he choked. 'Just along there. . . .' Nyder nodded to a heavy steel door along the

corridor. They moved to the door. It was locked. Nyder produced a key to open it and they all went inside.

Davros's office was small and functional, the walls covered with blueprints of early Dalek designs. The main feature was a small inner window which looked down on to the main laboratory below. They could see Davros haranguing the crowd, still with only one or two supporters beside him. The Doctor looked at Nyder. 'Where is it?' he snapped. Nyder said nothing, but instinctively his eyes flickered to a safe set in the wall. There was a combination-dial in the door. 'Be a good chap and open it for us,' urged the Doctor.

'Only Davros knows the combination.'

The Doctor looked at the safe. It was set fairly high in the wall. He pushed a chair underneath and sat down. 'I doubt that. Davros has the use of only one arm.' The Doctor raised his own right arm. From a sitting position the safe dial was well out of reach. 'You must have to open the safe for him. So open it for us, Nyder, or I'll let Harry throttle you. We're desperate men, remember.' Harry did his best to look ferocious. He must have done pretty well. Nyder went to the safe and spun the dials. The door swung open, revealing the tape-spool on a shelf in plain sight. The Doctor took it out and dropped it into a metal waste-bin. 'Now, we need some way to destroy it.'

'How about this, Doctor?' Harry had picked up a Dalek gun from the desk. Evidently an experimental model, it was plugged into a portable power pack.

'A Dalek gun,' said the Doctor, pleased. 'How *very* fitting!' With an appropriately ceremonial air, he raised the gun and fired it. The spool exploded into flames. They stood and watched it burn. Unfortunately they forgot to watch Nyder at the same time. Seizing his chance, he sprinted through the door, slamming and locking it behind him. Harry rattled the door furiously but it was no use. The Doctor was quite unconcerned. 'Let him go, Harry, he's not important. Our job here's over now anyway. The power of Davros has been broken. Old Gharman will see that the Daleks of the future are, well, humanised, you might say.'

'What about the ones Davros already has operational, Doctor?' Sarah asked, 'The ones you saw attacking the Thal City.'

'Gharman will have them recalled and destroyed,' said the Doctor reassuringly.

Harry thumped the door. 'Well, we're still locked in.'

The Doctor smiled. 'Doesn't matter in the least, old chap. We'll simply leave here. All we have to do is to stand in a circle and touch the Time Ring. . . .' The Doctor touched his wrist. 'Oh no!' The Time Ring wasn't there.

They stared wildly at each other. 'It's outside,' said Sarah suddenly. 'It's got to be. It must have come off in that fight with Nyder.'

Suddenly getting the door open became a matter of vital importance. Harry and the Doctor kicked at it to no avail. They tried the Dalek gun on it, but the power-pack must have been nearly exhausted. After charring the steel quite promisingly, the gun suddenly went dead. The Doctor produced a piece of wire and tried to pick the lock. 'It's no good,' he said disgustedly. 'He's left the key in the lock on the other side. Oh well, never mind. When the dethroning of Davros is over I expect someone will turn up to let us out.' The Doctor wandered over and looked at the scene in the laboratory below them. 'You know,' he said slowly. 'I *still* can't help feeling it's unlike Davros to give in so easily.'

The Doctor noticed a switch near a speaker-grille beside a window. He flicked it idly. Immediately they could hear the voice of Davros in the laboratory below. Isolated and alone, he was still talking as if *he* was the one

who held power. 'This is your last chance. Join me, or suffer the consequences!' No one moved.

Pityingly Gharman said, 'Accept defeat. It is over for you, Davros!'

'No!' shouted Davros suddenly. 'It is over for *you*! I allowed this charade for only one reason. I wanted to know who was truly loyal to me.' He gestured at the small group around him. 'With these few faithful helpers, I shall continue my great work.'

From his viewpoint above the laboratory, the Doctor saw Gharman's shake of the head. 'You are insane to talk like this, you must see that you are totally outnumbered.'

'No,' said Davros again, this time his voice low and menacing. 'It is *you* who are outnumbered, Gharman, you and your traitor friends.' With an elaborate gesture, Davros pressed a control. Every one of the many doors around the laboratory slid open. Framed in each one stood a Dalek.

The crowd fell back in terror as the Daleks glided into the room.

## 12 A Kind of Victory

Davros and his supporters retreated into one corner of the room. The rest, the vast majority, were herded into a tightly packed circle, surrounded by a ring of Daleks. Tighter and tighter the circle was drawn until men were jammed one against the other. For a long, terrible moment Davros regarded his enemies. Then he said, 'Exterminate them!' Fire blazed from the Dalek guns.

The Doctor and his horrified friends had grandstand seats at a massacre.

Bodies fell in swathes as the Daleks fired into the tightly packed crowd, and the room was full of screaming. Nyder entered from a door by Davros's side, and stood looking on with evident satisfaction.

Sarah turned sickened from the slaughter below and hammered hysterically on the door. 'Let us out. Please someone let us out!' she screamed.

Harry tried to calm her. 'It's no use, Sarah. . . .'

The Doctor tapped him on the shoulder. 'Don't be so sure, Harry!' He pointed. The handle of the door was moving, turned from the outside. They heard the key in the lock. The door began opening slowly, and a gun-muzzle appeared. The Doctor and Harry backed away – and Sevrin's hooded face appeared round the door.

Sarah ran to him and hugged him, but he cut short her thanks. 'I was looking for you when I heard your voice. We have very little time. The Thals have set explosive charges at the entrance. They'll detonate as soon as they're ready.'

'Thank you, Sevrin,' said the Doctor. 'Now if I can just find that Time Ring. . . .'

They found the Time Ring easily enough, in the corridor outside. Just as the Doctor snatched it up, a Dalek appeared at the end of the corridor. They set off at a run, only to find a second Dalek facing them at the other end. Skidding round they hurled themselves down a side corridor, relieved to see no more Daleks. They ran frantically down endless corridors, not pausing till the Daleks were far behind. The Doctor stopped in a wide corridor, buttressed by huge pillars.

He slipped the Time Ring from his wrist and passed it on to Sarah. 'Look after this for me, will you? Sevrin – I'm relying on you to get my friends out of here.'

Sarah stared at him. 'What are you going to do?'

'I'm going back to the Incubator Room. The charges are still laid. This time I'll blow the place up as I should have done before. Now, you three get out.'

Before anyone could argue the Doctor was sprinting down one of the side corridors. 'Come,' Sevrin spoke urgently. 'Time is short now.' Quickly he led them on their way.

Davros regarded the bodies of his fallen enemies. 'Now the traitors have been disposed of, the Daleks will take over security of the Bunker. The rest of us will go on, working to improve every aspect of Dalek design.'

Nyder ran back into the laboratory, stepping casually over the fallen bodies. 'Davros, the alien prisoners I locked in your office have escaped.' Davros could not bear that anything should mar his triumph.

'Then they must be found. Seek them out and exterminate them.'

Immediately there came a chorus of Dalek voices. 'We obey!' Daleks glided from the laboratory.

Bettan stood waiting in the blockhouse, looking nervously down the tunnel. A Thal soldier came running out of the tunnel, paying out flex behind him. He ran up to Bettan. 'That's the last charge in position.'

'Very well, prepare to detonate.'

The soldier began wiring the flex to a big portable field-detonator. Bettan stood watching him, spinning round as she heard footsteps running out of the tunnel. It was Sevrin with Harry and Sarah. 'I'd given you up,' she said, amazed. 'Better move back, we're almost ready to detonate.'

Sarah clutched her arm. 'You *can't*, not yet. The Doctor's still inside. . . .'

Harry added his plea. 'Give him a few minutes more at least.'

Bettan hesitated. 'Very well, just a few minutes. But if the Daleks start

coming up that tunnel then I detonate!'

The Doctor crouched in the Incubator Room, rewiring the charges with nimble fingers, ignoring once more the horrors gibbering all around him. His work concluded, he backed out into the corridor, trailing the wire behind him. The wire from the wall power-source was still stretched from the other side of the corridor. The Doctor grabbed it and was just about to bring the two wires together when a Dalek appeared at the end of the corridor. It fired, charring the wall by the Doctor's head. The Doctor leaped back, letting go of both wires as he did so. He sheltered behind the wall buttress and peered out. The Dalek hadn't moved. The Doctor could see the ends of the two wires, tantalisingly close together.

A wild thought struck the Doctor. He looked at the end of the two wires, so very near each other. . . . It might work, he thought. Suddenly the Doctor leaped from cover and zig-zagged down the corridor in full view of the Dalek. It fired, missed, fired again. The second blast missed too, and the Doctor leaped into a side-corridor out of sight. Angrily the Dalek started in pursuit. As it glided down the corridor the metal of its body casing, vibrant with static electricity, passed over the two wires and completed the circuit. . . . There was a huge detonation and the wall of the Incubator Room exploded outwards, burying the Dalek in rubble. The Doctor popped his head round the corner, took a quick look at the wreckage. He gave a satisfied nod and started sprinting back for the main exit.

In the blockhouse checkpoint, the anxious group looked down the empty tunnel. Nervously one of the soldiers began fiddling with the scanning equipment. Suddenly he shouted, 'Look, I'm getting a picture on one of these scanners.' Sure enough, one of the screens was showing a blurred picture of the main laboratory. They could even hear a faint murmur of sound.

'Try for more volume,' ordered Bettan.

Obediently the soldier adjusted controls. The picture improved, and sound came through clearly. Sarah shivered as she heard the voice of Davros. 'Send a patrol of Daleks to secure the main entrance.'

'I obey.'

'That is *it*,' snapped Bettan. 'I *must* detonate right away.'

'Give it one minute more,' begged Harry, 'Please!'

Bettan said, 'I'm sorry. I daren't wait any longer.'

The Doctor was haring down a corridor, running for his life. A patrol of Daleks appeared behind him. Their guns blazed and their metallic voices filled the air. 'Exterminate! Exterminate! Exterminate!'

Safe in his laboratory, surrounded by a guard of Daleks, Davros was preparing to resume his work. His eye was caught by flashing lights on an indicator panel. He wheeled his chair round angrily. 'The Dalek production line has been started. I gave no such order. Who is responsible?'

Davros looked angrily at the handful of surviving scientists scattered about the room. None of them spoke. A Dalek glided forward. 'I gave the order,' said the metallic voice.

Davros looked at his creation angrily. Some minor malfunction, no doubt. It could be corrected, perhaps even by a simple verbal re-programming. He glided his chair up to the Dalek and spoke slowly and clearly. 'You will perform no function unless directly ordered by *me*. You will obey only *my* commands. The Dalek production line will be halted immediately.'

The Dalek did not move.

Davros was enraged. 'You heard my order. Obey! Obey!'

Still the Dalek did not move. Nyder sighed. He moved towards the control panel, 'All right, I'll do it. . . .' He reached for the control. Almost casually, the nearest Dalek swivelled round and blasted him down. Davros looked on unbelievingly as Nyder's smoking body twisted and fell.

The Dalek spoke again, 'Production will continue.' Davros backed his chair slowly away. . . .

Harry and Sarah watched helplessly as the iron doors of the tunnel began to slide slowly closed. Bettan stood watching too, beside her a soldier with his hand on the plunger of an old-fashioned field detonator. Bettan said, 'Fire!'

The soldier heaved up the plunger handle. He was about to force it down, when Sarah screamed, 'Wait, please wait. The Doctor's coming!'

The soldier hesitated. Harry and Sarah ran to the doors and held them back by force. The Doctor came tearing along the tunnel, a patrol of Daleks close behind him. Just as their strength failed, the Doctor reached the fast-narrowing gap and squeezed through.

The Daleks glided in pursuit, gun-sticks blazing, then were hidden from view by the closing door. . . .

Bettan tapped the soldier on the arm. He pushed the plunger down with all his force. A thunderous explosion on the other side of the doors shook the check-point, sending them all flying.

Sarah picked herself up, and staggered over to the scanner screen. Incredibly, it was still working. On it they could see Daleks in a menacing circle around Davros. Davros was desperately trying to regain control of his creations but they could hear the fear in his voice. 'You must obey me,' he was saying. 'I created you. I am your master!'

One of the Daleks seemed to be speaking for the others, as if already they had evolved their own leaders. 'Our programming does not permit us to acknowledge any creature superior to the Daleks.'

'Without me you cannot exist,' insisted Davros. 'You cannot progress.'

There was total arrogance in the Dalek voice, the arrogance that Davros himself had given it. 'We are programmed to survive. We have the ability to evolve in any way necessary for that survival.'

Another Dalek glided in. Ignoring Davros, it reported to its leader. 'Main exit blocked by explosion to length of one thousand units.'

The Dalek began issuing orders to deal with the problem. Other Daleks glided to obey.

Sarah nudged the Doctor. 'Did you manage to do anything in the Incubator Room?'

'Quite a bit – with a little help from a Dalek. The damage I did will set them back a thousand years.'

'That's pretty good then, isn't it?'

The Doctor smiled ruefully. 'In the totality of Time, it's no more than – that!' and he snapped his fingers.

Harry drew their attention to the screen. 'Look, something's happening.'

Fascinated they gathered round to watch the inevitable end of the clash between Davros and the monsters he had created. The terrified handful of scientists who had elected to support Davros were being herded into a corner. The Dalek leader spoke. 'All inferior creatures are the enemy of the Daleks. They must be destroyed.'

Davros began pleading for the few men who had been loyal to him. 'Wait. These men are scientists. They can help you. Let them live. Have you no pity?'

'Pi-ty?' The word sounded strange in the Dalek voice. 'I have no under-

standing of the word. It is not registered in my vocabulary bank.' It wheeled to face the other Daleks. 'Exterminate them!' Once again the Dalek gun-sticks roared, and the handful of humans crumpled and fell.

In the centre of the laboratory, Davros confronted the Dalek leader. 'For the last time . . . I am your creator. You must . . . you will . . . obey me!'

'We obey no one. We are the Daleks!'

The watchers saw Davros spin his chair and speed it towards the destructor button on the wall. As his withered hand reached up, they heard the voice of the Dalek leader. 'Exterminate him!' All the Daleks seemed to fire at once and Davros and his chair exploded in flame, the destructor button still untouched.

The Dalek leader glided forward to address its fellows. The action brought it closer to the scanner screen so that it seemed almost to be talking to the small group watching in the checkpoint. 'We are entombed here, but we still live on. This is only the beginning. We will prepare. We will grow stronger. When the time is right, we will emerge. We shall build our own City. We shall rule Skaro. The Daleks will be the supreme power in the Universe . . .!' Suddenly the screen went blank.

'Thank goodness,' said Sarah. '*Please* – can we go now?'

Sevrin, Bettan and the others were already leaving, assuming the Doctor and his friends would follow them out of the blockhouse.

The Doctor said, 'The Time Ring please, Sarah.'

As Sarah gave him the Ring, she said, 'We've failed, haven't we, Doctor?'

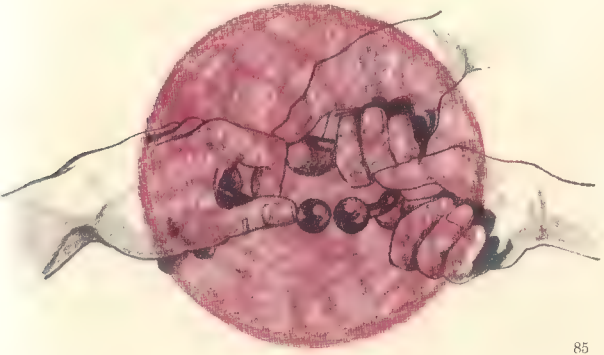
'Not entirely. We've given the Daleks a nasty set-back, perhaps that's all we were intended to do . . . it's a kind of victory.'

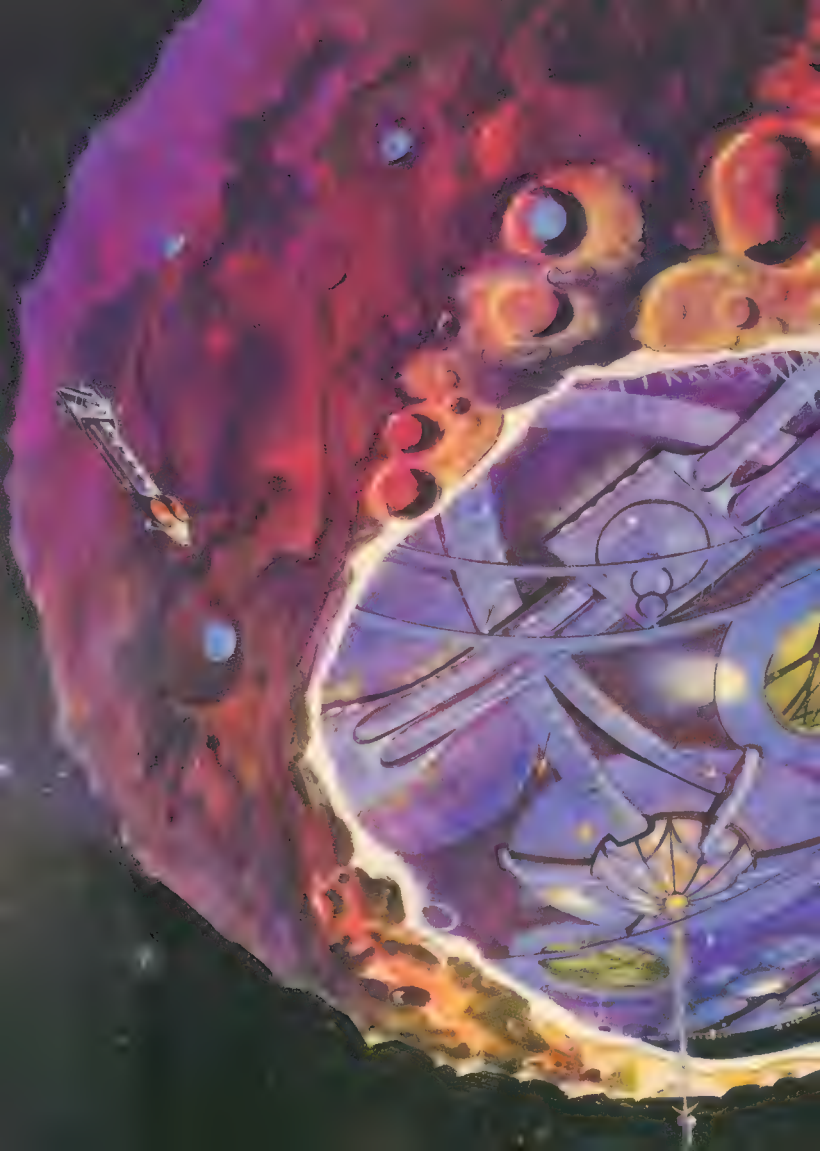
He smiled at Sarah who said, '*You* don't seem too disappointed anyway.'

'Hands on the ring please,' said the Doctor briskly. He held it up, and Harry and Sarah obeyed. Their fingers touched the metal and after a moment Sarah felt a strange disembodied sensation sweeping over her.

Sevrin, who had come back into the checkpoint to see what was delaying his friends, was astonished to see them simply fading away into nothingness. Sarah waved, called 'Good-bye, Sevrin . . .' and vanished.

Sarah felt everything dissolve into spinning blackness. But somehow she could still here the Doctor's voice echoing hollowly. 'Disappointed, Sarah? No, not really. You see, although I know that Daleks will create havoc and destruction for untold thousands of years . . . I also know that out of their great evil . . . some . . . great . . . good . . . must come.'





THE FORBIDDEN PLANET

# THE FORBIDDEN PLANET

Early astronomical investigation of the Seventh Galaxy established that Skaro was attended by two natural satellites. The larger of the two, Skaro's 'moon', was called 'Omega Mysterium'. The second planet was designated in the star charts as the satellite 'Falkus'.

Falkus is approximately 100 miles in diameter. It orbits Skaro at great speed, completing a circuit three times in every twenty-four Earth hours. It maintains a constant distance from Skaro of 240,000 miles. Its surface is barren and pitted with craters. It shows no indication of any life form. Spectroscopic examination revealed that there is no oxygen in the atmosphere. Nor is there any trace of liquid. For hundreds of years Falkus was dismissed simply as a large piece of space debris with no territorial or military value.

Certain aspects of the planet's behaviour continued to puzzle space scientists. Its estimated spaceweight did not conform with its surface area. It appeared to be much lighter than its bulk suggested .Research probes by unmanned rockets sent back readings unlike those from any other planet in the Universe. A robot drilling rig was successfully landed on Falkus. Its powerful boring head penetrated ten feet through the crusty rock deposits of the surface and was then halted by a barrier of what seemed to be solid metal.

A major investigation recently mounted by a United Worlds research unit has revaled startling new facts about Falkus, and whilst there is much that remains to be discovered, it is now certain that FALKUS IS NOT A NATURAL CELESTIAL BODY, BUT IS OF DALEK MANUFACTURE.

Professor Elkan of the University of Mars, who headed the research team, has produced the following report. However it must be stressed that much of the report is conjecture and remains to be substantiated.

'Falkus is the most secret and sacred place in the whole of Dalek culture. Its purpose and design was conceived by Davros in the early years of Dalek evolution. The philosophy behind its development was to create an inviolable and indestructible repository for the very essence of the Dalek life force. In the simplest terms, Davros wanted to build a safety deposit vault into which there could never be unauthorised entry, and which would resist all outside attacks. It would also have to survive through all of time. Even if its mother planet, Skaro, should be destroyed and all life eliminated, Falkus would remain. Kept in the very core of the artificial planet would be all the genetic elements that originally combined to evolve into the

Dalek as we know it today. These seeds of life would be stored in cryogenic conditions that would allow them to remain inactive but "alive" through an infinity of time.

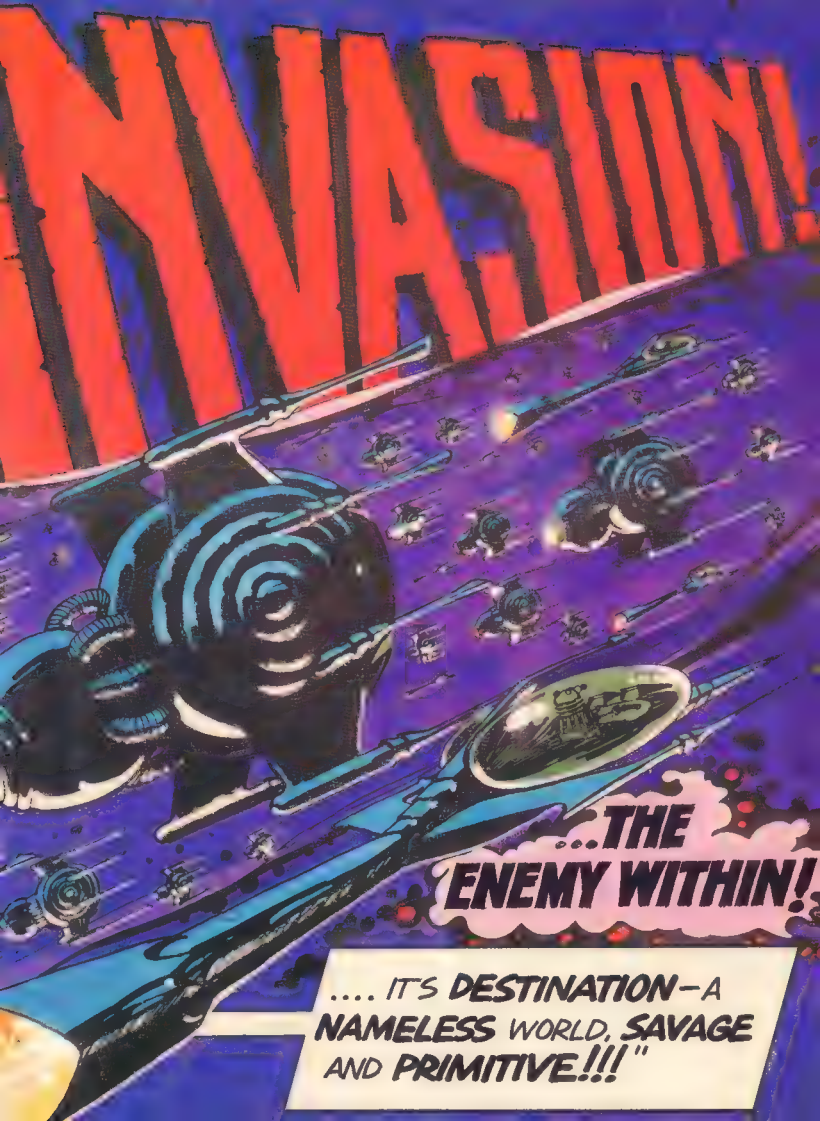
Davros died before his plan could be implemented, but developing generations of Daleks recognised the wisdom of his plan and work on the construction of Falkus was begun.

Prefabricated sections of girderwork were rocketed into space and assembled. When the great skeleton of the globe was completed, it was covered with a thick alloy shielding. This surface has, over the centuries, become coated with space dust and debris, giving the satellite a totally natural appearance. The city that was then built inside the orb must rank as one of the great technical achievements of all time. It is completely independent of all outside maintainance. The city is a "living" machine. It can repair and service itself. It has senses. It can "hear", "see", "feel". But most of all, it can defend itself. It will respond to any assault upon it in much the same way as the human body. If we are wounded, our system immediately masses anti-bodies around the injured part. So it is on Falkus. The defensive mechanisms go into instant action to destroy the invader. The city has only one "thought". To defend the precious life force encapsulated at its heart.

If all the Daleks in the Universe were to be wiped out, the race would begin again, here on Falkus. Only the Supreme Dalek has full knowledge of the significance of the planet. In the minds of the masses of the Daleks it is simply known as a most sacred place. The Supreme Dalek visits the planet once every 100 years. On his return, the crew of the rocket transporter have all recall of the visit erased from their memory banks.

It is the opinion of this research team that there is a second container stored in Falkus's central chamber. The dormant, but still living, brain of Davros. We believe, that in time of great peril, the Daleks would house the brain in a new body and allow his evil genius to be again released upon the Universe. Finally, it is our opinion that whilst Falkus remains, the scourge of the Daleks can never be eliminated. They will live forever.'

BEYOND THE BEYOND OF BEYOND, AT THE DARK ENDLESS EDGE OF ETERNAL SPACE, EXISTS A LIFE FORCE THAT HAS NEITHER FORM NOR SUBSTANCE. -FOR THIS INTELLIGENCE THE UNIVERSE HOLDS FEW SECRETS-BUT SOME MYSTERIES REMAIN!
"AT AN UNKNOWN POINT IN ELAPSED TIME, THE DALEKS LAUNCHED THE GREATEST WAR FLEET EVER ASSEMBLED.


INVASION!
...THE ENEMY WITHIN!
.... IT'S DESTINATION—A NAMELESS WORLD, SAVAGE AND PRIMITIVE!!!"

"THE CREATURES OF THE PLANET WERE RUTHLESSLY EXTERMINATED BY GUNSHIPS OF THE FIRST WAVE OF THE DALEK STRIKE FORCE....."

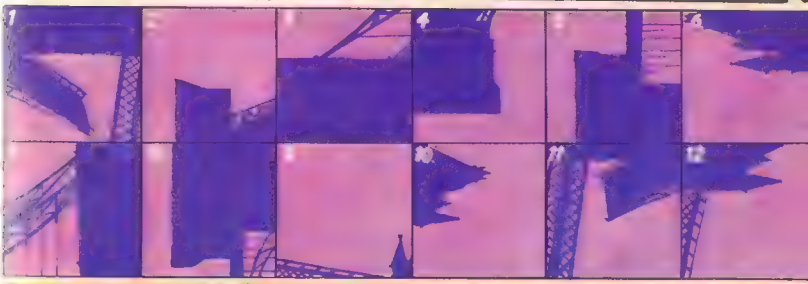
"A GREAT AREA OF PRIMEVAL FOREST WAS RAZED AND GIGANTIC EXCAVATORS ARE LANDED."

"AN ENORMOUS **VAULT** WAS CARVED **DEEP** BENEATH THE **SURFACE**- INTO IT CAME A **MASSIVE** ARMY OF **DALEKS** AND THEIR **EVIL** FIGHTING MACHINES....!!!"

THE **VAULT** WAS **SEALED**... AND THE **DALEK** FLEET MOVED ON TO CONQUER **NEW** GALAXIES. THE JUNGLE CREPT **BACK** ACROSS THE **RAVAGED** LANDSCAPE- **HIDING** ALL TRACE OF THE **SECRET FORCE!!**

"TIME BEYOND **COMPUTATION** PASSED – INTELLIGENT, INDUSTRIOUS **LIFE** EVOLVED. **NOW**, THE HOUR OF THE **DALEK REACTIVATION** IS NEAR. THEY WILL EMERGE TO **KILL, DESTROY ENSLAVE** AND **CONQUER!!**"

..."IT MAY BE **WEEKS** OR PERHAPS ONLY **HOURS** BEFORE THE ATTACK **BEGINS** – ALL THIS WE **KNOW** BUT ARE **HELPLESS** TO STOP IT. WE HAVE ONLY A '**THOUGHT IMAGE**' OF WHAT THE PLACE **ABOVE** THE **VAULT** NOW LOOKS LIKE – BUT, WE CAN NOT **IDENTIFY** IT **!!!**"




**YOU** CAN **IDENTIFY** THE PLACE BY **TRACING** THE DRAWING, **CUTTING** OUT THE SQUARES AND **ASSEMBLING** THEM IN THIS ORDER: **6,11,8,10,9,1,5,12,3,4,7,2.**

DOCTOR
WHO
AND THE
PLANET
OF THE
DALEKS

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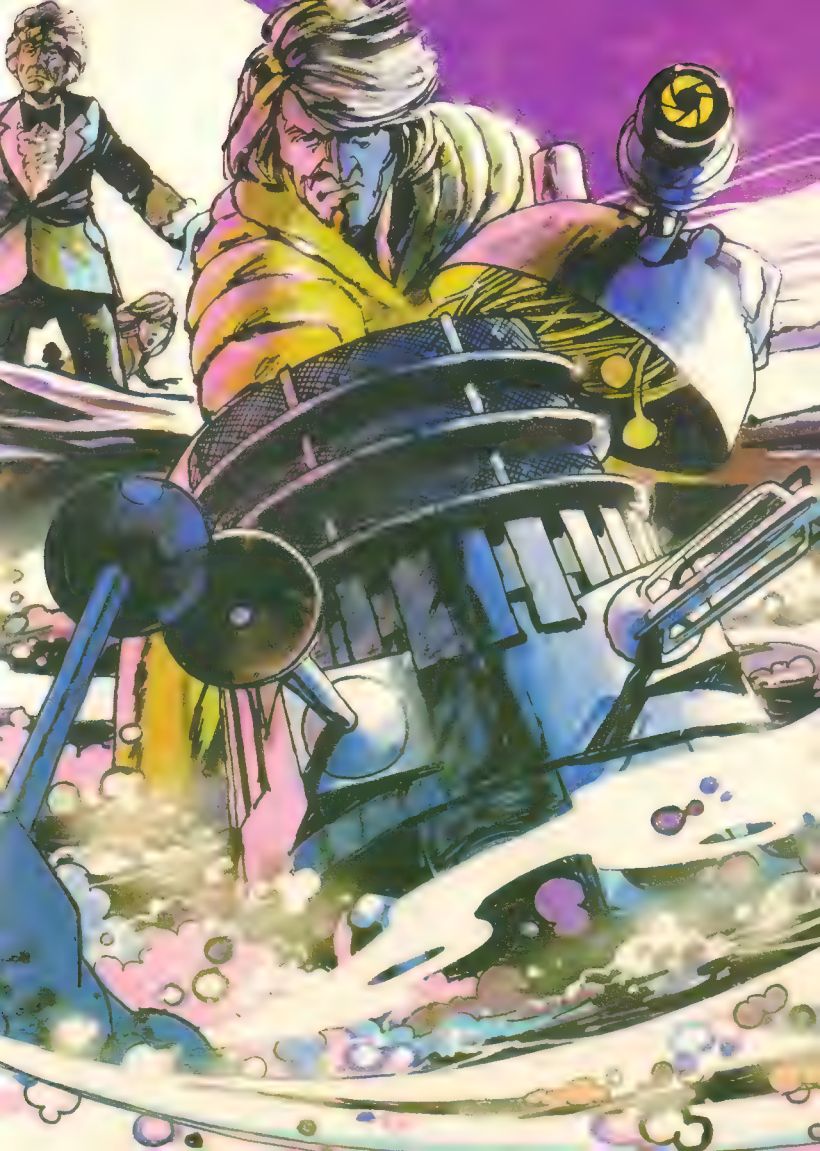


# 1 Joe Alone

The tall white-haired man lay still as death. The girl leaning over him could find no pulse, no beat from either of his hearts. His skin was icy cold to the touch.

She perched on the end of the couch and hid her face in her hands. All around her the machinery of the TARDIS hummed gently and contentedly, as if unconcerned with its owner's fate. The column in the many-sided central console rose and fell. The TARDIS was in flight through the Space/Time Vortex.

The girl, who was very small and very pretty, rubbed her eyes and stood up. She opened a locker in the base of the control console and took out a small black box. It was very much like one of the tape-recorders common on Twentieth-Century Earth, although its power source was eternal and its recording capacity unlimited. This was the log of the TARDIS, used only in emergencies. The girl switched it on and began to speak.

'My name is Jo Grant. For some time I've been the Doctor's assistant in UNIT the United Nations Intelligence Taskforce. Recently the Doctor took me for a trip in the TARDIS. We travelled far into the future and uncovered a plot to cause a space war. The Doctor discovered his old enemy the Master involved in the plot – and behind the Master were the Daleks.

'Although the Doctor managed to defeat the Master and prevent the war, he was seriously wounded in a Dalek ambush. I managed to get him into the TARDIS.'

Jo's voice faltered as she remembered the dangers they had escaped. She steadied herself, and went on. 'The Doctor had a serious head-wound . . . he was barely conscious. He managed to get the TARDIS to take off then used something he called a telepathic circuit to send a message to his own people, the Time Lords. After that he started slipping into a coma. He said he might sleep for a very long time. He asked me to record what happened in this log.'

Jo switched off the log and went to examine the Doctor again. When she'd finished she picked up the machine. 'The Doctor's breathing seems to have stopped. There is no pulse or heartbeat and his skin is icy cold.'

Jo Grant paused and took a deep breath. She was well aware that in any human being these symptoms could have meant only one thing death. What gave her hope was her knowledge that the Doctor was *not* human. She had seen him in this kind of coma before; it had been part of the mysterious process by which his Time Lord body was able to heal itself after exceptional damage and stress.

Suddenly she became aware that something was happening. The sound of the TARDIS had altered. The central column was slowing down. On the control panel, lights flickered, switches and controls moved of their own accord. She switched on the recorder. 'The TARDIS seems to be landing the Time Lords must be operating it by remote control. I hope they've brought us somewhere we can get help for the Doctor.'

Jo became aware of a squelching, slapping sound. It was coming from *outside* the TARDIS. She went to the control console and after some fumbling managed to find the scanner switch. Slowly a dim picture appeared on the little screen.

It showed a stretch of dense jungle, vines, trees, creepers and strangely-shaped plants jostling each other for room. She knew at once she was not on Earth. The vegetation was alien, with a sinister fleshy quality, as though this jungle was really one enormous beast. Through a slight gap in the foliage, Jo

could see part of some crumbling ruin like an ancient temple, eroded and overgrown. Something blobbed onto the screen, accompanied by the now-familiar squelching sound. Another blob appeared, then another. Jo looked hard. Rain? No, something thicker – and more alive. Jo switched off the scanner and stood thinking. Conditions looked nasty outside. It seemed to be night-time, and it would probably be cold. She went to a clothing locker in the wall and took out a long-sleeved, hooded coat, and a pair of thick gloves. Putting them on she went back to the Doctor.

'I don't know if you can hear me, Doctor. I'm going to look for help. I'll be back as soon as I can.' With a last look at the still figure on the couch, she slipped the little recorder into her pocket, operated the door-control and went out into the jungle. The door of the TARDIS closed behind her.

Stretched out on the couch, the Doctor was as cold and still as the stone effigy on a Crusader's tombstone.

Outside the TARDIS, the light was murky-green and the air was chill. Jo was glad of her warm coat. The TARDIS had landed in the middle of a thicket of spongy fleshy plants, which seemed to give out a sinister hissing sound. The police box, the TARDIS's exterior form, was covered with blobs of some thick white substance. Even as she watched, one of the spongy plants swayed forward and 'spat' another blob on to the side of the TARDIS. It was as though its arrival had triggered off some defence mechanism, and the plants were blindly attacking this new enemy. Jo had often heard the Doctor say that the TARDIS was invulnerable to outside attack. Deciding it wasn't likely to be harmed by a few messy plants, she turned to go.

As she moved, something struck her shoulder. One of the plants had registered her as an enemy and shot a stream of the viscous liquid at her. Shudderingly, she wiped it off with her gloved hand. Hurrying out of range of

the sponge-plants, Jo pushed her way through the jungle.

To her great relief, the jungle soon became less dense, giving way to a stretch of sandy ground in which the plants grew more sparsely. She became aware of a change in the quality of the light. The dull green murk was giving way to a yellow glare.

The temperature rose dramatically, and it was dawn, just as if someone had switched on a light. A great yellow sun blazed down from the sky, and Jo found it intolerably hot in the hooded coat. She took it off, noticing with distaste that the splash of fluid from the sponge-plants had turned itself into a thick green mould, which actually seemed to be growing on the coat. She threw it to one side and carried on without it.

Dotted amongst the other plants were taller reed-like growths, each one surmounted with a small round pod, fringed with leaves. In the centre of the pod was an opening, uncannily like the pupil of a human eye. As she passed a clump of these plants, Jo was amused to see the stalks sway towards her, and the eyes of the plants open wide as if in astonishment. But her amusement was soon over. She heard strange rustlings and weird cries from the thick jungle behind her. Jo hurried on, unable to shake off the feeling that *something* was following her. . . .

The Doctor's eyes flicked open. He swung his long legs to the ground, and stood up, looking round him. 'Jo?' he called. 'Jo, where are you?' He listened. All he heard was a continuous slap, slap, slap – as though something was splashing onto the outside of the TARDIS. The doctor sniffed. Something else was wrong. He went to the console. The instruments showed a breathable atmosphere outside – the TARDIS should have been drawing on *that* for air, first filtering out any undesirable elements. But there was a faintly musty smell in the air. The TARDIS was using its automatic air-supply. For some

reason no air was reaching the TARDIS from outside.

A warning light began blinking on the console. The Doctor looked. A tiny screen was flashing a message. 'AUTOMATIC OXYGEN SUPPLY EXHAUSTED.'

The Doctor shook his head. He was still feeling muzzy and confused. Everything seemed to be going wrong. 'Just have to use the emergency supply,' he muttered. He touched a control and a wall-panel slid back, revealing three large oxygen cylinders, each surmounted with a glass dial. The Doctor switched on the first one. There was a brief re-assuring hiss of oxygen – then silence. The Doctor peered at the little dial – the needle read 'empty'. He tried the second cylinder. The result was the same. The Doctor turned on the third cylinder, and this time the hiss was steady and continuous. He gave a sigh of relief and looked at the dial. The needle wasn't at the empty mark, but it was hovering perilously close to it. 'Less than an hour's supply,' said the Doctor, thoughtfully. He knew he had only himself to blame. It was bad enough letting one back-up system run low, but both. . . .

Registering a mental vow to top up *all* the TARDIS oxygen systems as soon as possible, the Doctor decided that since air wasn't getting in, he would have to go out. He took a cloak from the wardrobe locker and operated the door control. Nothing happened. The Doctor frowned, re-checked the control circuits and then tried again. Still nothing. He was trapped in the TARDIS.

In the silence the Doctor could hear the steady slap, slap, slap, from outside. The oxygen cylinder hissed away, the needle on its dial flickering steadily close to the empty mark. When the oxygen was exhausted, he would die. . . .

## 2 The Invisible Menace

Jo hurried on, making better progress now that the jungle had thinned out. She noticed something in front of her and dropped to one knee. In a patch of soft sand she saw the clear imprint of a foot. A little further ahead she saw another footprint, and then another. . . . She slipped off her glove to feel the ground, wondering if the footprint was recent or very old. She crumbled the sand between her fingers, not noticing how close she had come to the base of one of the sponge-plants. Suddenly the plant spat milky liquid at her. Jo jumped back, but a few drops of the fluid caught the back of her hand. She fished out her handkerchief and scrubbed the stuff off, throwing away the handkerchief when she'd finished. Pulling her glove back on she followed the line of footprints.

They led her through a patch of thicker jungle and into a clearing. In the centre of the clearing was the wreck of a small spacecraft, its hull picked out in blue and gold.

Jo moved cautiously towards it. The ship was small and stubby, vaguely cigar-shaped. Hull and fins were badly damaged, and the door hung open. Already a tracery of jungle vines was growing across the gap which didn't necessarily mean the wreck wasn't a recent one, thought Jo. Things probably grew with frightening speed in a jungle like this.

Jo called through the doorway. 'Hullo, anybody there?' No reply. Gathering her courage, she climbed inside.

The interior was cramped and gloomy, dimly lit by the greenish light filtering in from the jungle outside. In the nose-cone of the craft, Jo could see a tiny flight-deck. A space-suited figure was sitting in the pilot's seat. Jo moved towards it. The man showed no sign of being aware of her presence. Timidly she tapped him on the shoulder. The swivel chair creaked round, and the body

of the spaceship pilot slid gently to the floor. The face behind the helmet-visor was stiff and dead.

Jo screamed and backed away . . . and a hand came down on her shoulder. Two men stood looking at her. Both were tall and fair-haired, both wore simple uniforms with a sensible workmanlike look about them. They had wide webbing belts round their waists, from which hung a variety of tools and weapons, and small packs on their backs. The man holding her was very big with a long bony face, at once kindly and stern. The man behind him was smaller, thin-faced and younger, with a fierce angry look about him. In his hand was a blaster, aimed steadily at Jo.

Jo looked fearfully at them. 'Who are you?'

'My name's Taron,' said the big man. 'This is Vaber.' Vaber holstered his gun. It was clear that he didn't consider her much of a menace. 'Where do you come from?' he demanded. 'What planet?'

'I come from Earth.'

Jo's simple statement brought a surprising reaction. Both men stared incredulously at her. 'There's no such place as Earth,' said Vaber roughly. 'It's just a name in the old legends.'

'How did you get here?' asked Taron.

'In the TARDIS. It's a kind of spaceship.' To Jo's relief they accepted this without question. 'I've a friend with me,' she went on. 'He's desperately ill, he may even be dying. Please, can you help me?'

'Look, we've no time for . . .' Vaber began roughly. Taron interrupted him.

'I'm qualified in space medicine. I'll do what I can for your friend. Where is this TARDIS?'

'Back through the jungle, close to a sort of ruined temple.'

Taron nodded. 'I think I know the place.'

A third man ran into the spaceship. Like the others he was uniformed and fair-haired. He was very tall and thin, more openly frightened than either of them. 'Patrol approaching,' he gasped. 'Three or four of them.'

Taron took command. 'All right, Codal, we'll move out.' He turned to Jo. 'You stay here and hide. If we try to take you, you'll only slow us down. We'll lose them in the jungle and come back for you when we can.'

Before Jo could protest all three had run from the spaceship, leaving her full of unanswered questions. What was this unknown 'patrol' that had caused such alarm?'

She went to the door and looked out, but the three men had already vanished. Jo heard a sudden rustling sound from the patch of dense green jungle at the edge of the clearing. *Something* was forcing its way through it, and it was coming towards her. . . . Jo ducked back inside the ship and looked round for a hiding place.

She found a tall wardrobe-like wall locker which held spare uniforms and spacesuits. Jo slipped inside, huddling behind the rack of garments, and pulling the door closed behind her. There was a slatted ventilation panel in the door, so she could still see outside.

The ship rocked a little and the vines over the door were pushed aside. Jo peered through the panel, and saw nothing! Yet it was obvious that *something* had entered the cabin. She could hear hoarse breathing and stealthy padding footsteps. On the flight deck a pen, a plastic notebook, various navigational instruments rose and fell in an eerie way. Lockers opened and closed, their contents floated through the air and fell to the ground as the invisible searcher dropped them. Jo saw that the activity was coming nearer. She held her locker door closed from the inside. Sure enough, a few minutes later, she felt the unseen something on the other side of the door

trying to turn the handle. She clung on desperately. After a moment the pressure stopped and the hoarse breathing moved away.

Jo peeped out. Close to the door, a plastic carton jumped, as though suddenly kicked aside. The little craft tilted, the vines over the door were brushed aside by the unseen form, the craft lurched and then resumed its former position. Jo crept from hiding and went to the door, peering through the curtain of vines. On the marshy ground before the ship a line of footprints was appearing, footprints completely alien in shape. They moved towards the edge of the clearing, the plants rustled and waved, and the invisible intruder was gone.

Vaber and Codal crouched in a clump of thick jungle, blasters at the ready. They spun round at the sound of approaching movement. It was Taron. 'I think we've lost them. There were just a few scouts, and they're moving off that way, away from the ship. The girl should be all right. We'd better try to find this friend of hers.'

Vaber looked incredulously at him. 'You don't mean to say you meant it? Why should we waste time on some stranger?'

'Because he's ill. I'm still a doctor, Vaber. Even here.' Taron led the way into the jungle, and the others followed.

When they reached the ruined temple, they had quite a job finding the TARDIS. They had been looking for some kind of conventional spaceship. It took them some time to realise that the tall, oblong shape was the spacecraft they were seeking.

The fact that the TARDIS was coated with the rubbery fungus spat out by the sponge-plants didn't make things any easier.

Taron scratched his head. 'Well, whatever it is, it's the only *new* thing here – so it must be what we want!'

From a belt-pouch he took a tiny square of transparent plastic, which unfolded into a complete protective suit - cape, hood and gauntlets all in one. From his pack he produced a spray which dissolved the rubbery growth covering the TARDIS. When an area was cleared, Taron started pulling the fungus away with his gloved hands. The others joined him, the sponge-spores splashing harmlessly on their protective clothing.

When they'd freed the area around the door, it swung suddenly open, and the Doctor toppled out. They grabbed him and dragged him clear. The TARDIS door closed behind him, and the sponges resumed their mindless attack.

The Doctor was sucking great whooping breaths into his lungs. As soon as he could speak, he gasped, 'Thank you . . . thank you very much indeed. How did you find me?'

Taron told him of meeting Jo in their wrecked spacecraft. The Doctor was relieved to hear that until recently at least, Jo was still all right. Taron turned to Codal. 'Better circle the area, see if there's any more activity.' As Codal slipped away, Taron saw the Doctor staring intently at him. 'Well, what is it?' he said brusquely.

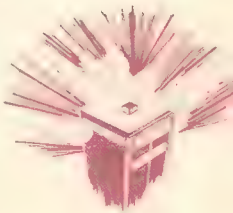
The Doctor said, 'Forgive me. It's just that I seem to know you all of you! Or rather, I know your people.'

'That's scarcely likely.'

'Oh you never know,' said the Doctor airily. 'I travel quite a bit. Where *are* you from?'

'A planet many systems from here. It's called '

'Skaro!' said the Doctor triumphantly, answering his own question. 'Of course – you're Thals!'



Taron stared at him. 'How could you possibly know that?'

'I've visited Skaro. I was there at the time of the first Dalek war.'

Taron looked at the tall shape of the TARDIS, now once more obscured by the rubbery spitting of the sponge-plants. 'In our legends, there is a being from another planet, who came to Skaro at our time of greatest peril. He travelled in something called. . . .'

'The TARDIS,' confirmed the Doctor. 'That's it over there.'

'He had three companions,' said Taron slowly.

'Barbara, Ian and Susan.'

'Are you trying to tell us that *you* are the Doctor?' demanded Vaber.

'That's right, old chap.'

'That's impossible. The first Dalek war was generations ago, before any of us were born. No one lives that long.'

'Ah, but I'm not a Thal. Besides, don't your legends tell that the TARDIS could also travel through time?'

Vaber came closer, his hand on the blaster in his belt. 'And now you turn up here – of all the planets in the galaxy! Well, I don't believe you. You've come to spy on us. Who are you? What are you *really* doing here?'

The Doctor looked calmly at him, trying to make allowances for the fact that Vaber was obviously frightened and exhausted, ready to lash out at any target. 'Now see here, young man,' he said mildly. 'You helped to save my life and I'm grateful, but that doesn't give you the right to interrogate me.'

They were interrupted by Taron. He whipped another aerosol from a belt-pouch and sprayed the Doctor's cheek. The Doctor jumped back. 'What do you think you're doing?'

'There was a splash of that white fluid on your face. It contains the growth-spores of the sponge-plants. The fungus grows very quickly. Without treatment it would have spread all over your body.'

The Doctor shuddered. 'It seems I must thank you for saving my life a second time.'

Jo grew bored waiting for the Thals to return, but she didn't dare go outside the spaceship. In a recess she found a wash-basin. She decided on a quick clean-up. It would not only make her feel better, it would help to pass the time till the others returned. She pulled off her gloves and started to roll up her sleeves. Then she stopped, gazing in horror at the back of her right hand. A spreading blotch of fungus had grown all over it. . . .

The Doctor listened, as his rescuers argued amongst themselves. It seemed to be a question of whether they should move off at once or wait for the return of Codal. Eventually it was decided to wait. The Doctor thought he might as well use the time in gathering some information about his new surroundings. 'What's the name of this planet,' he asked.

It was Vaber who answered, speaking with the harsh bitterness that seemed habitual to him. 'Spiridon – one of the nastiest pieces of planetary garbage in this galaxy.'

The Doctor raised his eyebrows. 'Indeed? Is it inhabited?'

'Oh yes! Vegetation with all the nastier characteristics of animal life. Animals that eat everything that moves, including each other. And a climate changing from tropical in the day to freezing at night.'

'Any *intelligent* life-forms?'

'Only the Spiridons. They had a civilisation once, but it's in ruins now.'

'I'd very much like to see one of them.'

Vaber grinned sourly. 'You'll find that very difficult. The Spiridons

happen to be invisible.'

There was another important question in the Doctor's mind. He spoke cautiously, feeling his way. 'I gather you're on some kind of special mission here that you have dangerous enemies?'

The Thals looked suspiciously at him, but didn't answer. 'I'm on something of a special mission myself,' continued the Doctor. 'Perhaps we can help each other?'

Taron shook his head. 'I'm sorry, we don't know enough about you to trust you like that.'

'Oh, why don't you tell him?' snarled Vaber. 'We're none of us going to get off Spiridon alive. This is a suicide mission.'

The Doctor looked sharply at him. 'What makes you say that?'

'We *crash*-landed. Our Commander was killed on impact, so Taron here took command. The sub-space radio was wrecked on landing, and the ship's so badly damaged we can never take off again.'

'You *volunteered*, Vaber,' said Taron harshly, 'No one forced you to come.'

For men sharing a desperate mission, they didn't get on very well, thought the Doctor. Quietly he asked, 'How many of you are there?'

'We *were* seven,' said Taron slowly. 'Miro, the Commander, was killed we've lost three more since then.'

'But you still won't accept my help?'

Taron shook his head. 'We'll take you back to your friend, then you're on your own. Our mission is too important to risk on unknowns.'

'You may not trust me yet, Taron, but I have a feeling there's already a very strong link between us. To quote an old Earth proverb "My enemy's enemy is my friend".'

The lanky Codal appeared from the jungle. 'Everything's quiet now.'

Taron stood up. 'Let's get moving. Doctor, if you see my signal get under cover fast. And don't make a sound.'

As they made their way through the jungle, Taron saw that the Doctor could move as silently as any of them. He seemed unaffected by the blazing heat, and showed no signs of tiring as they forced their way through the tough vegetation.

They came to a broad path cutting across the jungle. It had obviously been cleared by some advanced technological means. Touching the severed ends of a vine, the Doctor guessed at a wide-beam heat-ray. Taron held up his hand for silence. Something was coming towards them. Curiously enough, they could hear it but not see it. It made a strange clanking, grinding noise, suggesting some complex mechanical device on the point of complete break-down. A blurred trail crept towards them along the charred surface of the path. It wavered and stopped, and the harsh grinding sound died away. Codal looked at Taron. 'What do you think?'

'Sounds like light-wave sickness. That's what the others had.'

'Shall we risk it then? Show our new friend what we're up against?' Vaber had swung into a mood of hysterical cheerfulness. He ran out onto the path, and up to the point where the mysterious tracks ended. He pulled a couple of sprays from his belt pouch, and tossed one to the Doctor. 'Here you are, join in the fun!'

The Doctor looked at the spray. 'Is this some kind of weapon?'

Vaber laughed. 'It's *paint*, that's all. A paint-spray from the ship's stores.'

Vaber touched a nozzle on the top of the little spray and a mist of bright blue paint shot out. He waved the spray to and fro in front of him, and after a puzzled look at Taron, the Doctor did the same. His spray produced a fine mist of gold.

Slowly a shape appeared in the empty air ahead of them. The effect was rather like one of those magic drawing books, where a pencil rubbed across an apparently blank page produces a hidden picture.

This picture, however, was solidly three-dimensional. Standing in the middle of the path, its shape picked out incongruously in blue and gold, was the menacing form of a Dalek.

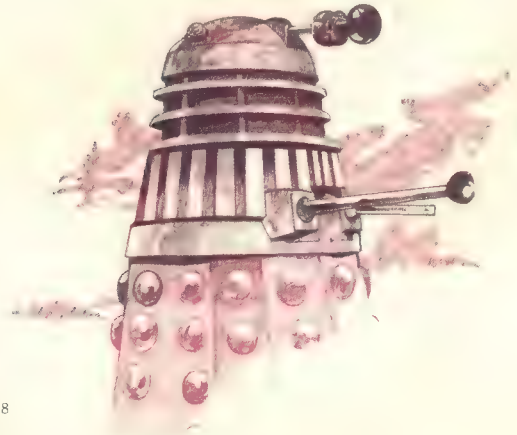
## 3 The Deadly Trap

Vaber looked at the Doctor wondering how he would react. If he expected fear or horror, he was disappointed. The Doctor himself had come to Spiridon in pursuit of the Daleks. Moreover, he had realised from the first that the presence of Thals confirmed that there were Daleks on the planet. Taron's 'special mission' could only be some operation against the hereditary enemies of the Thals. The Doctor started examining the Dalek with an air of brisk competence. He waved a hand in front of the eye-stalk. 'Total loss of vision, motive power nil. Weaponry de-activated too – luckily for us!'

Taron was watching him curiously. 'You seem to know a good deal about Daleks.'

'I've had cause. But I've never come across invisible ones before. How do they do it?'

Codal seemed to be the scientist of the party. 'They discovered it by studying the Spiridons. That is the reason they came to this planet. It's some kind of anti-reflecting light wave.' Recognising a fellow-spirit, Codal was talking as one dedicated scientist to another. 'Their problem is, that to create the energy needed they use enormous amounts of power. They can't sustain it for long. Either they revert to visibility, or they fall victim to light-wave



sickness, like this one. Let's take a closer look shall we?'

Codal was all set to dismantle the Dalek on the spot, but the Doctor held him back. 'We'd better keep moving.'

Some time later Taron halted them in a little clearing. 'Codal and I know this area best. We'll scout ahead. Vaber, you stay here with the Doctor.'

Taron and Codal moved away. The Doctor as always making the best of things, settled himself with his back to a curiously-gnarled tree trunk, long legs stretched out before him. 'Your Taron's a cautious fellow.'

Vaber agreed: 'Too cautious. Things'd be different if Miro was still alive. Taron is the expedition's doctor. I was Miro's number two, but technically Taron outranks me. He took command – and a fine mess he's made of it. He'll go on being cautious till we all get killed.'

The Doctor nodded thoughtfully. Vaber's story accounted for the tensions in the little group of Thals. Taron was unaccustomed to active command. He might well be ultra-careful, fearful of making some mistake. On the other hand, his attitude might be amply justified. As yet the Doctor knew too little of the situation on Spiridon to form a proper judgement. 'What do *you* think Taron should do?' he asked casually.

Vaber was eager to tell him. 'Attack the Daleks and wipe them out. There are no more than a dozen of them on the planet, just a small scientific party studying invisibility techniques. One determined attack could destroy them all.'

The Doctor nodded thoughtfully. It sounded a very attractive plan. But could things really be that easy? With the Daleks you could never be sure. 'Tell me about the Spiridons,' he said. 'Are they always invisible?'

Vaber abandoned his prowling and sat down at the edge of the clearing. 'Codal says so. According to him, this planet is so hostile they *had* to develop invisibility – he calls it the ultimate in survival techniques.'

The Doctor was intent on a clump of oddly-shaped plants growing near his tree. He had discovered that if he moved his hand to and fro, an eye opened on the pod, and the plant swayed to and fro as if watching him. 'Fascinating,' he murmured.

Vaber saw what he was doing. 'Useful, too. The plants react whenever one of the invisible Spiridons approaches. We use them as a kind of early warning system.'

'The Spiridons co-operate with the Daleks, then?' asked the Doctor.

'I don't think they have any choice. The Daleks saturated the jungles with killer rays. Invisibility didn't protect the Spiridons against that kind of thing. The survivors were too terrified to do anything but surrender and co-operate.'

Their conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Taron and Codal. 'What are you doing? Look at the eye-plants!' they shouted.

The plants were lashing about in agitation, the fringe of leaves curling closed over the central pod.

'Spiridon patrol,' said Taron. 'We'd better hide.'

He led them into the centre of a clump of low-lying plants, rather like dwarf palm trees. From their vantage-point they could see the jungle all around them being thrashed by the movement of unseen presences.

The Doctor studied the pattern of movements. 'The sweep's moving this way. They'll find us if we don't change position soon.'

Vaber reached for his blaster. 'Why don't we attack first?'

Taron's hand closed on his arm. 'We don't know how many there are! And what do we use as a target if we can't see them?'

Codal said, 'I'll lead them off. You can all get away while they're following me.' Before anyone could stop him, he left his cover. He started running

through the jungle, making no attempt to conceal himself and making as much noise as he could.

Codal came panting to a halt in the middle of a jungle trail. The Spiridon patrols were a long way behind. With any luck he'd led them far enough for the others to escape. It was time to begin circling round to rejoin them.

Just then he saw a clump of eye-plants beside the trail and realised with a feeling of dread that they were all tightly closed. Suddenly, unseen hands gripped him tightly. He struggled wildly, kicking and punching at his unseen captors, hearing grunts as the wild blows landed. But the struggle was hopeless since he couldn't see his opponents. Codal watched helplessly as a chunk of dead wood rose from the side of the trail and flew straight for his head. . . .

Jo Grant was feeling very weak by now. The blotchy fungus had spread halfway up her arm. It seemed to be draining her strength. Her temperature had rocketed, and she felt sick and giddy. She thought she ought to keep her log up to date, though there was little enough to say. Fumbling with her left hand, she took the little recorder from her pocket and touched the control.

'My hand and arm have become infected by some plant from the jungle. The infection is spreading very rapidly. I don't think the men I met here are coming back, so I'm going to try to get through the jungle and find help.' She switched off the recorder and thrust it clumsily back in her pocket, not noticing that it was only part-way inside. She got to her feet, staggering as a wave of dizziness came over her, and made for the door.

She was attempting to climb down from the spacecraft when she became aware of thrashing movement in the jungle. The invisible creature was returning! Terrified, Jo turned and went back inside, intending to return to her hiding-place in the locker.

She didn't notice that the recorder had dropped to the ground outside the ship. The effort of moving was too much for her. The cabin spun round and everything went black.

The jungle rustled as the Spiridon forced its way through the vegetation. It paused at the edge of the clearing, moved across to the little spacecraft and climbed aboard. Jo's body was sprawled in plain sight in the centre of the cabin. The Spiridon moved curiously towards her. . . .

Safe in a new hiding-place, Taron, Vaber and the Doctor waited as long as they dared for Codal to reappear. Finally Taron stood up. 'We'd better make for the spaceship. Maybe he'll rendezvous with us there.'

'Or maybe we're down to two, now,' said Vaber sourly. Taron said nothing. He led the way through the jungle, and the Doctor followed, Vaber trailing sulkily behind. It took them a long time to reach the spaceship. Taron moved with his usual caution, insisting on a wide detour to avoid further patrols.

But they came to the edge of the little clearing at last, the wrecked spaceship sitting in the middle of it. The Doctor pressed forward, eager to be reunited with Jo, but Taron held him back. 'Wait – there's movement on the other side of the clearing.'

To the Doctor's horror, four Daleks glided out of the jungle, grouping themselves in a semi-circle around the little ship. The Doctor heard the familiar, hated voice cutting through the jungle air. 'Dalek patrol calling Command Centre. Thal spacecraft has been located. We shall destroy according to instructions.' The Daleks widened their semi-circle. The patrol leader ordered: 'Prepare to fire.'

The Doctor started to get up. Taron tried to stop him. 'There's nothing you

can do.'

The Doctor threw off his grip. 'Jo's inside there! I've *got* to stop them.'

The Dalek voice ordered, 'Fire!'

Before the order could be carried out, the Doctor ran out from hiding, placing himself between the ship and the Dalek guns. 'Wait. You mustn't shoot, there's someone inside.'

For a moment the Daleks froze, as if stunned by the audacity of the interruption. Then the patrol leader spoke. 'Disable prisoner. Save for interrogation.' Instantly one of the Daleks fired and the Doctor's feet were smashed from under him by an agonizing blast of pain. As he crashed to the ground he heard the Dalek voice again. 'Proceed as ordered. Fire!'

His legs numb and useless the Doctor called, 'No, you mustn't. . . .'

Above his head the Dalek guns blazed in unison. The little spaceship glowed cherry red and exploded in a blast of flame.

## 4 In the Power of the Daleks

Unable to bear the sight of the blazing spacecraft, the Doctor lowered his eyes to the ground. A few feet away he saw a familiar black shape the TARDIS log-recorder. Automatically he reached out for it and thrust it in his pocket. A Dalek loomed over him. 'Stand up.'

The Doctor tried. Agonizing pins-and-needles shot through his legs, and he stumbled and fell.

'Stand up or we will exterminate you now.' Painfully the Doctor got to his feet.

The Dalek herded him forward. 'Walk!'

Feeling gradually came back to the Doctor's legs during the long march through the jungle, but he was glad when their destination came in sight. It was nothing more than a small squat blockhouse. The door slid open to reveal a lift, and the patrol with its prisoner passed inside.

The Doctor was quite unsurprised by this development. It was normal Dalek practice to install their bases underground whenever possible. Daylight and open air meant nothing to them, and they flourished best in a controlled underground environment.

The lift plunged down and down, and the Doctor cupped his hands over his ears as they popped under the changing pressure. At last the lift shuddered to a halt and they all filed out. The Doctor found himself in a long straight corridor, apparently cut from solid rock. At intervals in either direction other corridors intersected the one they were standing in.

The Doctor was taken to a heavy metal door. A Dalek touched a control, the door opened and the Doctor was thrust inside. The door closed behind him.

It was no surprise to the Doctor to find himself in a bare metal cell. What did surprise him was to see Codal crouched in one corner his head in his hands. The young scientist looked up in astonishment. 'Doctor!' Then his face fell 'So it was all for nothing. They got you after all.'

'Not all of us. Taron and Vaber are still free.'

Briefly the Doctor explained how he'd been captured. Codal told the Doctor of his own capture. 'I don't understand why they didn't kill me,' he concluded.

'I'm afraid they're saving us both for interrogation,' said the Doctor. 'They'll want to know what we're doing on this planet.'

Codal shuddered, terrified at the thought of Dalek questioning.

'We'd better start trying to find a way out of here. Now let's see if we've got anything useful. Did they search you?'

'No, not really. Just took away my blaster and my knife.'

'Then turn out your pockets. You never know.' The Doctor began searching his own pockets, but the first thing he found made him pause in sorrow. It was the log-recorder. He switched it on playback, listening to Jo's voice. 'The Doctor appears to have fallen into a deep coma. . . .'

He played the tape through, learning of Jo's leaving the TARDIS and her meeting with the Thals. He shuddered at the description of her infection by the fungus. Maybe her end had been a merciful one after all.

Jo Grant awoke from a nightmare-haunted sleep to find herself lying on a pile of skins in a little cave. She could see a greenish glow of jungle light coming from the vine-covered entrance. She became aware that her temperature had gone down and that the throbbing in her arm had almost vanished. She looked at her hand and arm. They were covered with a thick yellowish paste, and beneath it she could see that the stain of the fungus had receded.

Jo blinked and looked round the cave. A wooden bowl was hovering in the air, and a bunch of brightly coloured berries was squeezing itself into it. One of the invisible creatures from the spaceship was in the cave with her. Jo kept perfectly still. The bowl floated towards her. She heard the sound of hoarse breathing, and then a whispering voice. 'Do not be afraid. I want only to help you.'

Since there was no one else to talk to, Jo spoke to the wooden bowl. 'Who are you?'

'My name is Wester. I am a Spiridon. Drink this juice. It will help you to cast off the effect of the fungoid infection.'

The bowl bobbed nearer. Jo took it and drank the juice, which seemed tart and sweet at one and the same time. She felt it sending a glow through her body.

'The infection is almost gone,' whispered the ghostly voice. 'This will clear it completely.'

Jo drained the bowl and an unseen hand took it and put it to one side. 'What's happened?' she asked confusedly. 'Where are we?'

'We are in a cave near the Dalek city. I found you unconscious in a spacecraft and brought you here. Soon after, the Daleks destroyed the ship.'

'*Why* did you help me?' asked Jo. A wave of dizziness came over her.

'You must rest while the juice takes its full effect,' said the Spiridon voice.

Jo nodded, sleepily, letting herself drift away.

When she awoke some time later, she was fresh and alert. To her delight, all traces of the infection were gone from her hand and arm. Wester fed her on strange-looking fruits, and as she ate he told her of the sad state to which the Daleks had reduced his planet. 'They bombarded our world with bacteria and deadly rays. Spiridon became a planet of the Daleks. Only a handful of my people survived, and they were forced to co-operate with the Daleks in their attempt to discover the secret of invisibility.'

'But you don't co-operate?'

'A few of us do what we can to resist them . . . it's little enough. I hoped the aliens might help us but they are being killed one by one. Another was captured today though he looked different from the others.'

Jo's interest was aroused. 'What did he look like?'

'Tall and with white hair. His clothes were different.'

'The Doctor!' said Jo excitedly. 'He must have recovered after I left the TARDIS. Trust him to get straight into trouble. I've got to help him.'

'That is not possible,' whispered the Spiridon sadly. 'The Daleks will interrogate him, then use him in their light-wave experiments. He would be

better off dead.'

The Doctor put away his sonic screwdriver with an angry frown. 'Hopeless. If there's one thing the Daleks are good at, it's making locks!'

Codal shook his head sadly, 'Well, if we can't get the door open. . . .'

The Doctor took up the thought. 'Then we must make our escape when the door is *already* open.'

'By which time there'll be at least one Dalek standing there,' said Codal with gloomy relish.

The Doctor was not discouraged. 'Exactly. We've been looking at the problem in the wrong way We're not trying to deal with a *door* we're trying to deal with a *Dalek*!'

'How?' asked Codal simply.

The Doctor rubbed his chin. 'I'm not sure yet.' He poked irritably at the pile of objects they'd unearthed from their pockets. 'There must be *something* useful here. . . .' He picked up the little recorder. 'A small but very efficient electric motor with a built-in atomic power source . . . now if I dismantle the circuitry, reverse the polarity and convert it to a receiver-transmitter with positive feedback. . . .'

He looked expectantly at Codal who said, 'I see! The Dalek guidance system functions by means of high frequency radio-impulses. . . .'

'And if I can jam those impulses, the Daleks should have a nice little brain-storm.' Eagerly the Doctor set to work.

In a secluded jungle clearing, Vaber and Taron were digging furiously. As he worked, Vaber thought grudgingly that for once Taron's obsessive caution had paid off. As soon as they had crash-landed, Taron had decided that the Daleks were certain to discover the spaceship sooner or later. Almost his first action had been to order the transport of their precious explosives to this hidden cache in the jungle.

Taron grunted as his fingers touched plastic wrapping. After a little more digging he lifted out a large bundle and set it on the ground.

Exultantly Vaber helped him to unwrap it, and looked in satisfaction at the stubby cylindrical bombs with their attached timing and detonating devices 'There's enough explosive here to wipe out fifty Daleks. We can rush the blockhouse, blow the lift-shaft and bury the lot of them forever.'

'Suppose we don't make it to the lift-shaft? I won't take unjustified risks, Vaber. There are only two of us now, and you know what it means if we fail. We'll move when we have a plan that I think has a chance of succeeding, and not before.'

Vaber looked on appalled as Taron started rewrapping the explosives. He drew his blaster. 'Hand over those bombs.'

Taron glanced up, saw the blaster, and went on working. 'No.'

'Give them to me. I'll kill you if I have to.'

Taron finished wrapping the bundle and started to bury it. 'Then you'll have to kill me.'

Vaber glared helplessly at him, unnerved by Taron's calm. There was a sudden roar, a blast of heat, and something shot over their heads to vanish behind a nearby hill. Vaber looked after it. 'That was a spacecraft,' he said. 'Coming in to land too low and too fast. Come on!'

It didn't take long to find the wrecked spacecraft – the plume of black smoke soaring above the jungle made an excellent guide. They were almost in sight of it when there came a dull roar and a blast of heat that knocked them off their feet. 'It's blown up,' said Taron, as they picked themselves up.

'Let's hope they got out in time.'

They heard someone pushing through the jungle towards them and waited. A tall fair haired girl in Thal space uniform staggered out of the jungle, her face blackened with smoke.

Taron recognised her at once, and ran to her. 'Rebec! What happened?'

The girl looked at him dazedly. 'Our glide angle was too steep. We overheated coming through the atmosphere. The ship blew just after we landed.'

'Any other survivors?'

'Marat and Latep . . . just behind me.'

Vaber came forward. 'Why did you come? How did you know we needed help?'

The girl shook her head as if to clear it. 'When you didn't report by sub-space radio, we guessed you must be in trouble. Then Communications intercepted another Dalek space signal. This time they managed to crack the code. Once we'd read it, we had to warn you. . . .'

'Warn us? What about?'

'About the Dalek force on Spiridon.'

'We know that already,' said Vaber impatiently. 'There are only about a dozen of them.'

Rebec shook her head. 'That's what we thought when we sent you. But we were wrong. The signal we intercepted was to Dalek Supreme Command. It said the Dalek force on Spiridon was now complete. Somewhere on this planet, there are ten thousand Daleks!'

## 5 Escape

Even Vaber had to admire the stolid calm with which Taron took this shattering news. He nodded and said, 'This means we must act immediately.' He turned to Rebec. 'Are you fit enough to move? The Daleks will send a patrol to investigate the crash.'

Rebec said, 'I'm all right just a bit shaken.'

Two more Thals came out of the jungle, one a tall muscular man with a fresh open face. The other scarcely more than a boy. Taron greeted them calmly. 'Marat, Latep, are you all right? We can talk later. Right now it's important to get out of the area.'

With a cheeky grin, young Latep answered for both of them. 'We're fine. Came down with a bit of a bang, that's all. Marat was always a terrible pilot.'

Marat grinned, aiming a playful mock punch at his smaller friend. 'No one else would have got you here at all!'

Taron said seriously, 'It's good to see you – all of you. We'd better be moving.'

The little group of Thals disappeared into the jungle.

Just outside the city, Jo Grant crouched in hiding, Wester beside her. Not that Wester needed to hide, she thought, since he was invisible anyway. By now Jo was quite accustomed to the unseen presence of the Spiridon and to the ghostly whispering in her ear. She parted the leaves and peered through the gap. She could see the blockhouse, Dalek guards patrolling all round it. Figures in furs and skins were carrying great basket-loads of vegetation through the blockhouse doors.

'Who are they?' she asked.

'They are Spiridons, enslaved by the Daleks.'

'But I can *see* them.'

'You see the robes they wear. The Daleks have ordered all our people to wear such robes. They must be visible at all times.'

'What's that stuff they're taking into the city?'

'Samples of our vegetation. The Daleks are experimenting with plant-destroying bacteria.'

'If I could get into one of those baskets, I'd be carried straight past the Dalek guards.'

'It is too dangerous,' hissed Wester.

Jo ignored him. 'Where would they be likely to take the Doctor?'

'Prisoners are always held on the lower levels. He is probably on level seven.'

'I'm going to try it,' said Jo. 'Come on, let's work our way round to that patch of jungle.'

Getting into one of the baskets proved surprisingly easy. They made their way to the edge of the jungle and crept up on a party of Spiridon slaves working under the supervision of a Dalek guard. Jo edged as near to the baskets as she could without being detected, while Wester moved noisily about in the jungle on the other side of the clearing. The Dalek guard registered the noise and moved to investigate. The slaves watched the guard, chattering excitedly together in their hissing voices. Jo slipped into a nearly-full basket, burying herself under the thick vegetation. The Dalek guard, finding nothing, herded the Spiridon slaves back to work. Soon two of them picked up her basket and started carrying it towards the city.

Jo lay under the vegetation, her heart pounding. She hoped that getting *out* of the Dalek city was going to prove as easy as getting in.

Taron and the other Thals stood shivering in the middle of a strange, icy landscape. They had climbed a range of low rocky hills covered with a thick coating of icy slush. They were dotted with gaping, cavernous openings rather like giant pot-holes, and it was to the edge of one of these sinister apertures that Taron had led them. The edge of the hole was rimmed with ice and snow

Rebec crumbled a piece of the ice between her fingers. 'There's something odd about this stuff – it's well below freezing point, but it's still *soft*. . . .'

Taron nodded. 'Codal called it an allotrope ice in a different form from the kind we know. He says the core of this planet is a solid mass of the stuff. Every so often, the pressure builds up and the ice pours out of these holes.'

Marat peered into the hole. 'Sort of a cold volcano?'

'That's right. Codal calls it an "icecano".'

'Very interesting, Taron,' said Marat. 'Now tell us why you brought us here and why you sent Vaber and Latep back for the explosives?'

'When we first landed on this planet, I ordered a full reconnaissance of the area around the Dalek city. I formed a plan to destroy it. But things went wrong. First we lost three men in an ambush, then Codal was captured. That left me and Vaber. My plan wouldn't work with just two men so I abandoned it, started looking for another. Now you're here we can revert to the original idea.'

He went on, 'When the Daleks built their underground city, they used this icecano to provide a cooling system. Apparently they needed very low temperatures for their experiments. The Daleks drove shafts out to meet the natural fissures. If we go down one of these outlets and work our way along to the junctions, we could reach the heart of their city unseen, plant charges at strategic spots, and blow the whole place up.'

Rebec looked into the dark icy hole and shivered. 'And suppose this icecano thing erupts while we're down there?'

Taron said nothing. The answer was obvious enough.

Marat was looking down the icy slope. 'Vaber and Latep are coming,' he called.

Slipping and sliding on the icy rock, the two Thals toiled up to rejoin their friends. Vaber unwrapped the bombs and shared them out. The Thals stowed them away in their back-packs. Vaber looked alert and eager, his normal sulkiness transformed by the prospect of action. 'I've changed the hiding-place of the rest of the explosives, as you ordered, Taron,' said he. 'I've marked the position on a map.' He showed Taron a crumpled piece of paper. 'X marks the spot!'

Taron took the paper and studied it. 'I know the place. Here, Marat, you take this just in case. Vaber, you and Latep take your bombs and find another opening, closer to the main entrance of the city. Blow up the main lift-shaft and the whole place will be buried. The rest of us will attack from this end.'

Taron produced a coil of fine plastic rope from his pack and slung it over his shoulder. He touched a control in his belt. 'Switch on your heating units all of you, it's going to be cold down there.' Poised on the edge of the hole, Taron looked round the little group, his eyes lingering on Rebec for a moment longer than the others. He swung a leg over the edge and slid down into the darkness. Vaber and Latep helped Rebec and Marat to follow him down. Then they turned and ran, looking for the hole that would provide their own entrance to the Dalek city.

The Doctor finished his work on the re-assembled recorder, fitting the parts tidily back into the box. He looked up at Codal. 'Well, that's the best I can do. Only one thing we need now a Dalek to try it on!'

Codal said nervously, 'I think you're going to get your wish. I can hear the lift.'

A few minutes later the door opened and a Dalek entered the cell. Codal and the Doctor were sitting innocently in the corner. The Doctor's hands were behind him.

'Prisoners will stand,' ordered the Dalek. Slowly they got up. 'You will be taken for interrogation. Move!'

The Doctor and Codal moved slowly towards the Dalek. When they were close enough, the Doctor shouted, 'Now!'

Codal leaped on the Dalek, jamming it against the wall. His shoulder to the metal casing, he grabbed the Dalek's gun-stick, forcing it upwards. At the same time the Doctor jumped behind the Dalek and pressed the re-built recorder to its headpiece.

The Dalek struggled violently in Codal's grip. It was amazingly strong and he knew he couldn't hold it for long. 'Surrender immediately, or you will be exterminated,' grated the harsh voice. Then, almost immediately, it changed its sound. The pitch became higher and there was a note of hysteria. 'Surrender, surrender . . . I am losing control, I am losing control. . . .' Suddenly the words garbled together in an agonized electronic shriek. Wrenching itself from Codal's grip, the Dalek began hurling itself about the cell, crashing and rebounding from one wall to another like a bee trapped in a bottle. Codal and the Doctor jumped desperately about in the confined space, trying to avoid being crushed. At last the Dalek zoomed straight at the wall, crashed into it, rebounded, spun round, and was still.

Gasping, Codal looked at the Doctor. 'That's a very effective little

machine.'

'Not any more,' said the Doctor sadly. He picked the crushed recorder from the floor. In the confusion it had been stepped on by the Doctor and run over by the Dalek. It tinkled when the Doctor shook it. 'Still it served its purpose.'

The basket was put down with a thump, and Jo peered cautiously out. She was in a long, wide corridor. Fur-clad Spiridon slaves were emptying the baskets into metal bins and pushing them into what seemed to be a huge laboratory. Clearly, it wouldn't do for Jo to be still in her basket when it was tipped out. She slipped out of the crate, keeping the stack between her and the Spiridons, and ran off.

It was obvious she couldn't stay in the open Daleks or Spiridons were bound to spot her. Jo decided to look for a hiding-place while she thought out her next move, and crept cautiously through the next door in the corridor

It took her into a huge rock-walled area, packed with various kinds of Dalek scientific equipment. Jo guessed it was their control centre. Behind a glass wall dividing the area they were moving about on various mysterious tasks. There were more Daleks in the control area but they were all some way away with their backs to her.

Jo looked round for a hiding-place. Like most of the Dalek underground city, the room seemed to have been carved from solid rock, and the walls weren't quite regular in shape. Huge gleaming instrument consoles had been lined up against the rock walls but they weren't completely flush with it. There was a gap into which a very small person might squeeze. Thankful, not for the first time for her lack of size, Jo slipped behind the nearest console and worked her way along the gap until she was completely concealed.

Suddenly, a dial close to her hiding-place began to give out a sharp pinging sound. Two of the Daleks moved across to it, and Jo could hear their voices on the other side of the bank of instruments. 'Sensors detect ice eruption imminent.'

'Prepare to close all cooling ducts. Activate closure when warning dial reaches red alert.'

'I obey.'

One of the Daleks returned to its place on the far side of the room. But the other stayed where it was, evidently watching the warning dial. In its present position it would certainly see Jo if she tried to get away. Her hiding place had become a trap.

The news of the ice eruption, meaningless to Jo, was a deadly threat to Taron and his party. They were working their way along the ice fissure, which by now had broadened out into a sizeable tunnel, hoping it would lead them to the Dalek city. An icy wind sprung up, accompanied by a low rumbling noise. They struggled forward against it as long as they could, until they came to a point where the tunnel branched. The noise of the wind was too great to allow talking but Taron made a gesture that they should wait. He ran a little way down the right-hand tunnel, then stopped in horror. A wall of ice completely blocked the tunnel – and it was moving towards him.

Taron turned and ran back to the fork, making signs to his little group that they should turn down the left-hand path. Rebec shook her head, pointing back the way they had come, obviously suggesting that they should give up and go back. But even as she pointed, the wall of the fissure cracked open, and more ice flooded through, blocking their retreat. There was only one way they could go. As they ran down the left-hand fork the ice appeared behind them, pursuing them down the tunnel.

The Doctor and Codal had almost succeeded in reaching the lift when a Dalek appeared round a corner. The Dalek's lights flashed agitatedly and it began screeching, 'Alert! Alert! Alert!'

The message was received in the central control room where Jo still crouched in hiding. Again she heard Dalek voices.

'Level seven reports prisoners are at liberty.'

'Instigate condition of maximum alert. Normal operations will cease until prisoners are recaptured.'

'I obey.'

A moment's pause and then another voice, speaking over a public-address system. 'All Daleks will report to lower levels. Maximum security search to commence immediately. Locate and destroy prisoners. Locate and destroy!'

In her hiding-place, Jo Grant listened excitedly to the Dalek voices. She was sure the Doctor was one of the escaped prisoners. Trust him to get away without her help.

## 6 Danger on Level Zero

Codal and the Doctor pelted frantically along the complex of corridors, dodging round corner after corner as more and more Daleks appeared. The Doctor however was not running completely at random. He led them round three sides of a square and at last the lift door came in sight, the doors standing invitingly open. The Doctor and Codal hurled themselves inside and a Dalek appeared in the lift corridor.

The Doctor stabbed frantically at the lift controls. It took the astonished Dalek a moment to register their presence. By the time it had raised its gun-stick to fire the lift doors were already sliding closed. They came together just as the Dalek fired, the blast of its gun scorching the metal doors as they came together.

Inside the lift the Doctor was stabbing at the 'up' control. Nothing happened. 'They must have operated the master control,' said the Doctor. 'Well, what won't go up, must go down.' He ripped off the panel by the controls and made a few adjustments with his sonic screwdriver. 'Hold tight, Codal, we're dropping to level zero non-stop!'

He touched a control, there was a shower of sparks, and the lift dropped like a stone. Codal sank to the floor, hands over his ears, which were popping with the rapidly changing pressure.

The lift stopped with a jarring thump, and the Doctor opened the door. It opened on a gloomy, dimly-lit area with rock-walled corridors stretching off in several directions. The whole place looked primitive and functional, less finished than the higher levels. The Doctor guessed that this would be where the basic maintenance machinery of the Dalek city was kept. The Doctor led the way along a corridor, more or less at random. The first thing was to find a safe hiding-place.

He had chosen a corridor that seemed dark and deserted, hoping that it would lead well away from the main centres of activity. Although the Doctor didn't realise it, the corridor was empty because it had been evacuated. It was part of the area most endangered by icecano eruptions. Along the corridor at regular intervals were metal grilles flanked with heavy metal shutters. At the moment the shutters were drawn back, and an icy blast of cold air steamed through each grille. The Doctor shivered, wondering why the Daleks needed to keep this area so cold. As they passed yet another of the grilles, he heard a grinding, rumbling sound. It seemed to be getting closer.

'Doctor! Codal.' The Doctor was astonished to hear the voice of Taron floating out of the air. He ran to the grille and was just able to make out Taron crouching on the other side.

'Doctor, help me free this grille,' interrupted Taron. 'We're trapped in this shaft and the ice is moving up behind us.'

With the Doctor and Codal tugging on one side and Taron and Marat pushing from the other, the metal grille didn't stand a chance. It gave way with a shriek of rending metal. The Doctor threw it to one side – just as the heavy, electrically-operated shutters started to close.

The Doctor and Codal each seized the edge of a shutter and struggled to hold them back. Taron wedged himself longways between the closing shutters.

The cooling shaft was almost filled with ice now and Marat could feel its clammy bulk pressing against him. 'Hurry,' he yelled. 'It's going to crush us!'

Despite the effort of all three men, Taron's powerful body was slowly being folded in two by the pressure of the twin shutters. Quickly Rebec clambered over him. Marat followed. Codal and the Doctor gave a final heave and Taron rolled out into the corridor. Thankfully the Doctor and Codal let go, and the shutters slammed closed, a thin trickle of ice trapped between their edges.

The Doctor helped Taron to his feet. There was a babble of greetings and explanations. Suddenly Codal yelled, 'Daleks! Run, everybody!'

Two Daleks had appeared in the corridor. The Doctor led his party at a run in the other direction, dodging and weaving to escape the blast of the Dalek guns.

The two Daleks followed in pursuit. As they reached the shaft through which Taron and the others had come, the metal shutters buckled inwards. A gushing flood of ice poured into the corridor, burying the Daleks.

The Doctor paused, looking back over his shoulder. 'Now there's a bit of luck,' he said cheerfully. 'Let's get away from here.'

The news of the Doctor's progress was relayed to the Dalek control room. 'Prisoners have been driven to level zero. All ascent areas sealed off. All units proceed to level zero immediately.' Daleks began gliding from the room but the one near Jo still remained in his place. She was still trapped.

The Doctor and his friends got quite some way before they ran into the next Dalek patrol. They turned a corner to find half-a-dozen Daleks waiting in ambush. Spinning round they ran desperately down the nearest side corridor, dodged down another corridor, and found themselves trapped. This corridor ended in a pair of massive metal doors. Another, smaller door, also closed, stood just to the left of them.

The Doctor looked at the control panel beside the doors. 'Bolts locked,' he said. 'This is some kind of security area.' Working with amazing speed he unscrewed the control panel, and began using his sonic screwdriver. 'If I can over-ride the security seal. . . .' With agonizing slowness the larger doors began to slide apart. The gap widened until it was almost big enough to admit a body. Daleks appeared at the far end of the corridor.

Marat, at the rear of the little group, glanced at the slowly opening doors and at the advancing Daleks. Five people had to get through those doors, *and* close them again, before the Daleks were near enough to fire. Before anyone could stop him, Marat yelled, 'Get inside, all of you!' Drawing his blaster he began running towards the Daleks.

As if astonished, the Daleks halted their advance. Marat had time to fire only once. One of the Daleks spun round under the effect of his blaster.

Immediately the rest of the Daleks fired in unison. Marat's smoking body was slammed across the corridor.

By now Rebec, Codal and Taron were through the gap. The Doctor sent an anguished look after Marat, realised he was beyond all help and went through the doors himself. On the other side he worked quickly on the controls and the heavy doors began sliding closed again. The edges touched just as the first Daleks reached them and opened fire. Once inside, the Doctor made a few more adjustments, and leaped back as there was a shower of sparks and a bang. 'Fused solid,' he said with satisfaction. 'They won't open them with the controls, that's for sure.'

Rebec was sobbing in Taron's arms. He patted her awkwardly on the back. 'There's nothing we can do for him now,' he said gruffly.

The Doctor came over to them. 'Oh yes there is!' Marat sacrificed himself to buy us a little more time. We owe it to him to make good use of it.' Rebec nodded, stifling her sobs.

They were in a huge circular rock walled chamber, with a domed roof. Massive Dalek machines hummed and throbbed around them. The Doctor crossed to examine them, looking at the rows of dials and switches. 'It's some kind of refrigeration unit,' he said. 'This must be the cooling chamber. Now, with all that ice around, why do the Daleks need to make it colder still? You could freeze an ocean with a unit this size.'

'Well, at least we're safe for a while,' said Rebec shakily. 'There's no other door, and if that one's really sealed...'

'Don't underestimate the Daleks,' said the Doctor warningly. 'They won't let a little thing like a solid metal door hold them back for long.'

Codal was examining a big metal cowl, like a chimney piece projected out from one wall. 'Look at this,' he called. They all went across to join him. He was standing directly under the cowl, pointing upwards. A huge circular 'chimney' with gleaming metal walls stretched up above them. It went up and up until it ended in a tiny dot of blue, almost out of sight.

'Some kind of ventilation shaft,' said the Doctor. 'Seems to go clear up to the surface.'

Taron grunted. 'No use to us. Too wide and too smooth to climb.'

The Doctor nodded absently, the tiny spark of an idea glowing somewhere in his mind. He ducked out from under the cowl, and wandered across the room. Some of the machinery in one corner was evidently under repair. It was covered with huge protective sheets of transparent plastic. The Doctor tested it between his fingers. It was fine but seemed very strong. He looked at the coils of plastic rope slung over the shoulders of the Thals. The Doctor ran his fingers through his hair, his mind full of calculations about weight, lift and gravity. A scream from Rebec interrupted him. 'Doctor, look at the door!'

A tiny glowing, smoking point had appeared in the metal of the door. As they watched the point started to move downwards, forming the beginnings of a line.

'They're cutting through the door,' said Taron.

Outside the heavy metal doors, the leader of the Dalek security squad looked on in satisfaction as the cutting equipment gradually extended the glowing line. Another Dalek approached. On the end of its sucker arm was a crumpled scrap of paper. 'The dead Thal was carrying this paper.' The squad leader studied the paper. It was the map Vaber had given Marat, after shifting the hiding place of the explosives.

Inside the cooling chamber, the Doctor was showing the Thals how to tie lengths of rope to the corners of a huge square of plastic. 'I wish you'd tell us the point of all this,' grumbled Taron. 'Just what are we making?'

'Well on Earth they'd call it a parachute – but it's a parachute for going up, not coming down.'

'You're not trying to tell me we're going to fly up the chimney?' asked Codal incredulously.

'It's the only way we can get out,' said the Doctor. 'There's a powerful updraft in that chimney. If we can trap a big enough pocket of it in this all we have to do is hang on.'

Taron said, 'That's ridiculous, Doctor. It'll never work.'

'It had better,' said the Doctor grimly. 'Look!'

While they had been busy, the line on the door had enlarged itself to form two sides of a square-arch. Once the third side was cut, a huge chunk of the doors would simply fall away, leaving an arch through which Daleks could enter.

The knots completed, the Thals manhandled the unwieldy sheet of plastic across the room and began stuffing it up the cowl. They disappeared underneath, and after a moment Codal emerged. 'It's no good, Doctor. It's forming a pocket, but the updraft isn't strong enough.'

The Doctor rubbed his chin. 'Hold on, I'll switch the unit to maximum. That'll boost the updraft.'

The Doctor ran to the refrigeration unit and began adjusting controls. Under the cowl, Taron and the others felt the updraft increase to a steady gale. The Doctor was crossing the room to join them when his attention was caught by something on the wall nearby. A short ramp ran up to a little platform. Set in the wall just above the platform was a metal-shuttered window. The general effect was of a kind of viewing gallery. But a viewing gallery to what? Even under such dangerous circumstances as these, the Doctor was unable to resist. Curiosity had always been his strongest characteristic. He ran up the little ramp, pulled back the shutter and looked through.

From the other side of the room, Codal called, 'It's working, Doctor, the balloon's lifting.'

The Doctor scarcely heard. He was staring, in sheer amazement at one of the most astonishing sights he had ever seen. The little window looked out onto an enormous dimly-lit cavern, metal catwalks round its walls. The cavern was so vast that its furthest walls were lost in shadow, and it was completely filled with row upon row of Daleks, thousands of them, standing completely still, wisps of icy vapour drifting about their bodies. A whole army of Daleks, silent, motionless, waiting. . . .

Another shout from Codal broke into the Doctor's trance. 'Doctor, they're almost through the door. Hurry!'

The Doctor looked at the metal doors. The third side of the arch was almost cut through. He ran to the cowl. The plastic 'parachute' had risen far up the chimney, and the Thals were hanging on to the ropes Taron tossed one to the Doctor and he caught hold, wrapping it round his fists. The ropes were tugging hard now, trying to lift them up but not quite making it. The Dalek cutting machine was on the last few inches of the arch. 'It's no use,' yelled Codal. 'There's not enough lift to take all our weight.'

'Give it time,' said the Doctor steadily. 'It'll take us up.'

'It isn't going to work,' said Rebec despairingly.

The leader of the Dalek security squad watched the cutting machine complete the last section of its 'arch'. A Dalek gripped the cutaway section with a magnetic clamp and pulled. The section lifted out.

Gun-sticks at the ready, the Daleks swept into the cooling chamber.

# 7 Ascent of Peril

The cooling chamber was empty. The Daleks crowded into the room, spinning round wildly in search of the fugitives. There was a note of hysteria in the squad leader's voice. 'Escape from this section is impossible. There are no other exits. The prisoners are hiding. Locate and destroy. They are to be exterminated.'

The orders were impossible to carry out. There was nowhere for the prisoners to hide, nowhere to search. The Daleks milled about the room in a state of utter confusion.

The Doctor and his friends meanwhile were floating slowly up the great metal chimney, the plastic sheet billowing above them like the spinnaker-sail of some great yacht. They had achieved lift-off seconds before the Daleks had entered the room. Once they were under way the ascent seemed easier, and now they were rising slowly but surely upwards.

Rebec glanced down and shivered, closing her eyes. 'How far have we climbed?'

The Doctor looked down at the drop beneath them. 'Hard to tell I just hope we're high enough to be out of range. One of them's bound to look up here sooner or later.'

Even as the Doctor was speaking, one of the Daleks had glided beneath the cowl. Its eye-stick swivelled casually upwards, then it let out an astonished squawk. 'Prisoners located.' It lifted its gun-stick and fired.

They heard the roar of the blast as it echoed round the chimney, and even felt the heat, but they were quite unharmed. 'There's a relief,' said the Doctor. 'It seems we *are* out of range!' He saw Rebec twisting on her rope, sobbing with fear. 'Just keep your eyes closed, my dear, and hang on tight. You'll be all right.'

He looked at the two others. Taron was hanging on in grim silence, but Codal was looking about him keenly, scientific interest overcoming his fears. 'How long before we get to the top, Doctor?'

'Quite a while. We're coming right up from the lowest level, remember. It's going to be a long, slow climb.'

In the cooling chamber below the Dalek leader was giving orders. 'A patrol will be sent to the surface immediately, to the point where the shaft emerges. They must reach the area before the prisoners can escape. Order an anti-gravitational disc to be brought here immediately.'

'I obey.' The second-in-command glided from the room. The squad leader moved under the cowl and swivelled his eye-stalk upwards. The prisoners were scarcely visible now, just slowly ascending dots. But they had not escaped. Soon Daleks would be waiting at the head of the chimney, and a Dalek pursuing them up it. They had simply entered a trap, with no escape.

Jo Grant wondered if she was doomed to spend the rest of her life hiding in Dalek control like a rat in the wainscotting. There was only one Dalek in the area now, but it was still too near her. Her heart sank when two others entered and crossed to her Dalek. 'You will come with us. The ice eruption is under control. We have discovered where the Thals have hidden their explosives. We must find and destroy them.'

'I obey.' The three Daleks left the control room the way to Jo's escape was clear. After a moment's reflection, she decided to follow the patrol. For one thing, they would presumably lead her out of the city. For another, perhaps she would find some way of preventing them from finding the Thal explosives.

There was no way she could help the Doctor directly now; the next best thing was to help the Thals.

Jo slipped along the corridor after the three Daleks. They passed the laboratory area where slave Spiridons were still unloading endless baskets of vegetation. Tossed over a crate, Jo saw one of the voluminous fur robes worn by the Spiridons. Presumably its invisible owner had abandoned it in defiance of regulations. Hoping he was nowhere near, Jo snatched up the robe and pulled it on. Grabbing an empty basket, she set off after the Dalek patrol.

Jo followed the patrol along the corridors, into the lift, up to the surface and out into the jungle without being stopped or checked. As soon as she was clear of the blockhouse, she dropped behind the patrol and dumped her disguise and her empty basket in a clump of bushes. Using the jungle for cover, she hurried after them.

The Daleks led her through the jungle across an area of rocky hillside, and finally into a sort of quarry. Watching from a distance, Jo felt the ground beneath her vibrating. She could see the Daleks moving to and fro along the bottom of the quarry, a rock wall rearing up above them like a cliff-face. The rock was loose and crumbly. Occasionally chunks rattled down onto the patrol, dislodged by subterranean vibrations from the icecano. Finally one of the Daleks paused by a large rock. The others joined it, and between them they pushed the rock away, revealing the entrance to a tiny cave. Inside the cave mouth lay a plastic-wrapped bundle.

Jo crept closer, until she was near enough to hear what the Daleks were saying. 'Explosives are equipped with detonating mechanisms. We will explode them here. Activate mechanisms.'

One of the Daleks glided closer to the bomb cache, its sucker arm reaching out. 'All mechanisms now primed. The bombs will self-detonate when we have left the area. We will now return to the city and assist in re-capturing the escaped prisoners.'

The three Daleks wheeled and filed away. Jo waited until they were out of sight and made her way towards the bombs. She was determined to switch off the bombs if she possibly could. Maybe the Thals, or the Doctor would get a chance to pick them up later and use them against the Daleks.

The bombs lay in the cave mouth, ticking away quietly. They were stubby metal cylinders, each surmounted with a little clock face. The single hand on each clock was moving slowly from the 'one o'clock' to the 'twelve o'clock' position. It was easy enough to work out that when the hand reached twelve the bombs would blow up. Beside the clock face was a small button, like that on a stop watch. Bracing herself, Jo reached out and pressed the button. The hand stopped moving. She gave a sigh of relief and switched off the second bomb, ignoring the dirt and small stones rattling down from overhead.

A further shower rained down as Jo moved over to the third bomb. Unfortunately for Jo this contained a few larger stones, and one of them struck her behind the ear. It wasn't very big, only slightly larger than a tennis ball, but the impact was enough to knock Jo out. She slumped forward over the third bomb. Since she hadn't managed to turn it off, this third bomb was still ticking. The hand on its clock moved steadily towards detonation point.

Dangling from their parachute-balloon, the Doctor and the Thals were now near the top of the enormous chimney. The round blue disc of sky was bigger and nearer now, and they were beginning to hope they might actually reach it. The Doctor seemed to be enjoying himself. 'You must admit,' he said chattily, 'it really is rather an exhilarating sensation?'

Rebec, her eyes tight shut, spoke through clenched teeth. 'The only time I

ever want to leave the ground again, is in the rocket that takes me away from this planet.'

'Now don't *worry*,' said the Doctor reassuringly. 'As long as you hold on tight, you're perfectly safe.'

Above the Doctor's head, at the point where his rope was attached to the plastic sheeting, a tiny tear appeared. Slowly, very slowly, it began to spread.

A long way below, in the cooling chamber at the bottom of the chimney, a squad of Daleks was manoeuvering a flat metal disc into position beneath the cowl. It was about a foot thick, and just big enough for one Dalek to stand securely in the centre. The squad leader glided up a little ramp and took his position on the disc. A Dalek scientist reported, 'Anti-gravitational disc now in position. Energy building up to full lift-off capacity.'

Even as he spoke, a hum of power came from within the disc. It built up to a throbbing crescendo and then stopped. The squad leader ordered, 'Prepare for lift-off!' The energy-hum started again, this time with a steady throbbing note. 'Lift-off!'

The anti-gravitational disc rose slowly in the air, carrying the Dalek up the long chimney in pursuit of the fugitives.

Meanwhile, another Dalek patrol was moving swiftly through the jungle on its way to intercept the prisoners at the top of the shaft. They were passing along a trail that led through a kind of quarry when the squad leader spotted a suspicious sight on the rock slope ahead. A small figure was crouching over some silvery objects.

Jo Grant was just recovering consciousness. Muzzily she climbed to her hands and knees, shaking her head to clear it. Suddenly she became aware of double danger. The clock-hand on the third bomb had almost reached detonation point. And Daleks were advancing towards her along the trail.

Jo grabbed the two switched-off bombs and scrambled up the rocky slope. The Daleks increased their pace. 'Halt. Halt and surrender or you will be exterminated!'

Ignoring the order Jo stumbled on. The Daleks followed and, as they came level with the little cave, the third bomb exploded. There was a tremendous explosion and a huge avalanche of earth and rocks poured down. Jo flung herself to the ground. When the noise died away she looked up.

Where the Daleks had been was a huge pile of rubble, burying them completely. A bomb under each arm, Jo stumbled towards the shelter of the jungle.

The parachute-balloon had almost reached the top of the shaft by now. The Doctor peered upwards. 'The chimney narrows near the top, and the sides are ribbed. The parachute may jam, but we should be able to climb up. Be ready to grab a hand-hold!'

Taron was looking downwards. 'There's something coming up after us!'

The Doctor looked down and saw the little dot of the gravitational disc moving steadily up the chimney. 'It's all right,' he called. 'It isn't climbing any faster than we are and we've got a big start. We'll be at the top before it gets in range.'

Suddenly he heard Rebec scream, 'Look, Doctor, the parachute! It's tearing!'

The little tear by the Doctor's rope had become a huge rip, spreading rapidly across the plastic sheeting. 'The whole thing's going,' he yelled. 'Jump for the sides we'll have to climb.' One by one, Rebec, Codal and Taron jumped for the metal ribbing, climbing it like a ladder. They climbed up and

up, arms and legs aching, for what seemed an incredibly long way. At last, one by one, they were able to scramble over a low stone parapet that bordered the chimney outlet and into the open air. Taron was the last to climb out. He leaned over the parapet and looked down the shimney. 'The Doctor's still inside!' he yelled.

Last to leave the falling balloon, the Doctor had succeeded only in catching the very lowest rung of the ribbing ladder. With no foothold to help him climb, he was dangling from it by both hands.

Lower down the chimney, the crumpled mass of plastic, its supporting air-pocket dispersed, was drifting slowly downwards.

Lower still, the anti-gravitational disc, its Dalek passenger clearly visible by now, rose steadily towards the helpless Doctor.

## 8 The Enemy Within

Swiftly Taron uncoiled the length of plastic rope from his shoulder and lowered it into the shaft. It was almost long enough, but not quite. The end of the rope dangled less than a foot from the Doctor's hands. The Dalek on its anti-gravitational disc was rising steadily higher. It would soon be near enough to fire. The falling plastic threatened to smother it, and the Dalek blasted it into flaming fragments.

At the top of the shaft Taron called, 'He can't reach it. Rebec, Codal, hold my legs.' He lowered the upper half of his body into the shaft, straining to bring the rope within the Doctor's grasp. The Doctor let go with one hand and reached out the end of the rope brushed the tips of his fingers.

The pursuing Dalek was very close now. The rescuers made one final effort. Taron leaned full-length into the shaft, secured only by Codal and Rebec's grip on his ankles. The Doctor lunged desperately upwards and managed to catch the end of the rope with his left hand. Just as he did, his right slipped from the smooth metal of the ribbing. He dangled spinning in mid-air, gripping the rope with one hand.

Rebec and Codal gripped Taron's legs, bracing him against the Doctor's weight on the rope. The Doctor meanwhile grabbed the rope with his other hand, and started to climb it even as the three Thals were pulling it up. Taron fell back outside the parapet, then the Doctor shot out of the chimney like a cork out of a bottle, scrambling over the parapet.

'Dalek,' he gasped. 'Still coming up.' He looked round for a weapon. Embedded in the ground near the parapet was a huge rough boulder. The Doctor ran to it and started heaving with his shoulder. 'All of you, help me,' he ordered. Even with four of them it was a tremendous job to roll the boulder up the hillside and then to lift it up onto the parapet. Heaving and panting they managed it at last. For a moment the boulder was poised on the parapet. Then with a final shove, they tipped it over.

They crowded round the parapet to see the result. The boulder whistled down the shaft and struck the anti-gravitational disc on edge spinning it like a coin and wrecking the anti-gravitational mechanism. Boulder, disc and Dalek tumbled down the shaft together, gathering speed as they fell.

At the bottom of the shaft the squad of Daleks was gathered round waiting. The hurtling objects shot out of the shaft all together. There was a tremendous roar as the anti-gravitational disc exploded, and Daleks were blown in all directions.

At the top of the chimney, the Doctor and his friends heard the noise. The

Doctor smiled in satisfaction. 'That should hold them for a while. Let's get away from here, before their patrol arrives.'

Taron said, 'We must get to the quarry where Vaber left the explosives. If the Daleks find that map they'll try to destroy them.'

They set off down the hillside. As they were approaching the quarry, Jo Grant was leaving it. She met them crossing a jungle clearing.

Scarcely able to believe her eyes, Jo flung herself into the Doctor's arms.

The Doctor was just as delighted. 'I thought *you* were dead. I thought you were in that Thal spaceship when the Daleks blew it up.'

Jo began pouring out a confused explanation of her adventures, but the Doctor stopped her. 'There'll be plenty of time for explanations later. You've already met Taron and Codal. This is Rebec.'

Taron interrupted. 'It'll be dark soon. I think we'd better pick up those explosives.'

'If you're talking about some bombs hidden in a quarry — don't bother,' said Jo. 'One of them went off, and I've hidden the others in a clearing nearby.' She told them what had happened at the quarry.

Taron shook his head wearily. 'So much has been going on that it's hard to think straight. We'd better rest here for a while.'

The Thals set up camp. Their seemingly inexhaustible back-packs produced supplies of concentrated food, and tiny atomic-powered stoves with which to heat them. Soon they were all washing down the chewy food-concentrates with delicious hot soup, and Jo felt strength flooding back into her body. As they ate, Jo and the Doctor brought each other up to date on their adventures. Both realised how lucky they were to have come together again unharmed.

'What are the Daleks doing on this planet, anyway?'

'I *thought* they were just studying the secret of invisibility, but there's more to it than that. They've got an enormous army concealed here, I saw it myself. It's obviously part of some plan to conquer the Galaxy.'

While the Doctor and Jo were talking, Rebec and Taron sat together nearby. It was their first chance to be alone since they had met again on this planet. Back home on Skaro they had been close friends, with an understanding that they would eventually marry. But here on Spiridon, Rebec had found Taron a different man, his manner strained and almost hostile. 'You might at least say you're glad to see me,' she said lightly.

He looked coldly at her. 'I might. Why did you come?'

'Because I wanted to be with you.'

Taron was silent for a moment, then he burst out, 'Don't you understand what you've done? Even if Vaber and Latep are alive, there are still only five of us. Five survivors from two missions, to destroy an army of Daleks.'

'How does my being here make things any worse?'

In a level voice Taron said, 'Because I love you. And that will cloud my judgement. I may hesitate to take risks, necessary risks, because I'll be worrying about you. And if my judgement fails, then the Daleks will win!' He got quickly to his feet and crossed to the other side of the clearing.

The Doctor joined Taron there. He was staring morosely into the thick green jungle. 'Load getting a bit heavy, old chap?' asked the Doctor.

Taron couldn't help responding to the sympathy in his voice. 'I'm not sure I can handle things any more.'

'Because you're not made of stone?'

'I have to *lead* this expedition, Doctor. It's a job that doesn't allow for human weakness.'

'Perhaps they should have sent a machine.'

'I thought I could act like one,' said Taron grimly. 'I was wrong.'

'Good!' said the Doctor heartily. 'The business of command is not meant for machines. Forget you're dealing with people's lives and you're no better than the creatures we came to destroy. Once *we* start acting like the Daleks the battle's already lost!'

Taron was about to reply when he heard movement in the jungle. He drew his blaster and waited, calling a warning to the others. 'Look out, someone's coming.' They waited tensely – and Vaber and Latep came out of the jungle. There was a joyful reunion amongst the Thals. Vaber and Latep had been about half-way along their chosen ice-fissure when they had heard the icecano beginning to erupt. Not daring to go on they had set their bombs to explode, only to see them engulfed by a surge of ice which had absorbed the effects of the explosion.

'We were lucky to get clear alive,' concluded Latep. 'We went to the quarry to get the other bombs, but they'd already been exploded.'

Jo couldn't resist joining in. 'Not all of them. I rescued two and buried them not far away.'

'Then we've still got a chance,' said Vaber eagerly. 'We can attack again in the morning.'

'Maybe,' said Taron, 'but meanwhile we've got to get through the night. We can't stay here, it's too near the main Dalek trails. Besides, we'd never survive the cold. We'll have to go to the Plain of Stones.'

The Doctor looked puzzled. Codal came forward and explained. 'It's an area scattered with huge boulders. They're made of a stone that soaks up the sun's heat during the day and releases it at night.'

'Sort of night storage heaters,' suggested Jo. 'It'll be nice to be somewhere warm for the night.'

'It's a dangerous place,' warned Codal. 'A lot of wild animals go there for the warmth.'

Taron said, 'Jo, will you take Latep to the place where you hid the bombs? The rest of us will pack up camp.'

Jo turned to Latep, who smiled at her. She decided she quite liked the look of him. He had a cheerful open face, and as the youngest and smallest of the Thals, he was the only one anywhere near her own age and size. 'Come on,' said Jo. 'Let's go and get those bombs.'

With the bombs collected and the camp packed up, they all set off through the jungle again. It was almost dark now, and it was getting very cold.

The Plain of Stones was exactly what its name suggested, a bleak plain littered with huge boulders. Their fantastic twisted shapes loomed up out of the darkness. From all around came the growling, chattering and howling of Spiridon animal life. They found a circle of boulders grouped together, a kind of miniature Stonehenge, and decided to make camp between them.

Taron turned to the Doctor. 'Will you take the first guard with Latep, Doctor?'

'Yes, of course. Maybe you'll keep us company for a while, Jo.'

They became aware of angry voices. Vaber was helping Codal to set up the camp, and indulging in his usual complaint. Since the failure of the attack on the Dalek city, his old moroseness had returned. 'I'm sick of all this running and hiding, Codal,' he was saying. 'We need to attack, and soon.'

Taron crossed over to them. 'I'll decide that, Vaber.'

'You – you've already bungled one attack.'

'We'll attack again, but the whole thing has to be properly planned. Until then, we wait.'

The word might have been chosen to enrage Vaber. 'Wait!' he sneered. 'That's all we hear from you. I suppose you're scared to take any action with

her round your neck.' He nodded towards Rebec.

Taron's big hands flashed out and gripped Vaber round the throat, shaking him savagely. Vaber kicked Taron's feet from under him, and the two men rolled struggling on the ground. The Doctor's voice cracked out like a whip. 'Stop that, both of you. Get up at once!'

Shamefacedly the two Thals got to their feet. The Doctor spoke more gently. 'We'll never defeat the Daleks unless we stay united. We're letting the strain make us suspicious and hostile. That's the real enemy, the enemy within. Not the Daleks but our own fears.'

For a long moment Taron and Vaber glared at each other. Then Taron said slowly, 'I'm still in command here, Vaber. We'll attack when I say so, and not before. Like it or not, you'll obey orders. If you don't I'll kill you!'

In the control room, the Dalek Expedition Commander was addressing his aides. Grouped around him in a semi-circle, they listened meekly to the arrogant voice. 'One patrol is missing. Others report no contact with the prisoners. Supreme Command are gravely displeased with the progress of this operation.' No one replied, or attempted excuses. The Expedition Commander went on, 'Supreme Command has decreed we prepare a bacteriological weapon. It will destroy all living tissue on Spiridon. Daleks and Spiridon slave-workers will be given immunity to the disease.'

Massive retaliation to opposition had always been the Dalek way. The Commander turned to a Dalek Scientist. 'Report progress on the bacteriological weapon.'

The Dalek Scientist indicated a metal trolley inside the laboratory. Through the glass wall they could see that it contained a number of jars. 'The bacteria are now multiplying. After release into the atmosphere, the culture will totally contaminate the planet. All plant-life will wither and die. All unimmunised animal life will be exterminated. The culture will be ready for release in one Spiridon day.'

'Approved. Continue preparations.'

Another Dalek entered and stood waiting to speak. The Commander swung towards it. 'Report.'

'Spiridon slave-spies report aliens in hiding at Plain of Stones.'

'Order all search units to concentrate on that area.'

'I obey.'

Her back against one of the boulders, Jo Grant was dozing comfortably. Gradually she became aware of an agitated voice, breaking into her dream and bringing her awake. It was Taron, shaking the Doctor who lay dozing beside her. 'Doctor, wake up. It's Vaber. He's cleared off and taken the bombs. I'm going after him.'

The Doctor rose. 'I'll come with you.'

'I'd prefer you to take charge here.'

The Doctor was pleased by Taron's trust. 'All right. If that's what you want.'

'Codal, you come with me,' ordered Taron. 'The rest of you stay here. The Doctor's in command till I get back.'

Codal and Taron slipped away into the darkness. Jo drifted back to sleep, only to be awakened by the Doctor. 'I think we'd better build a fire,' he said.

Jo was still drowsy, disinclined to move. 'Why, Doctor, it's warm enough, with these boulders.'

'Not for warmth, Jo, for safety. Look!' The Doctor pointed. A circle of fiercely-glowing eyes was ringing the camp. The wild-life of Spiridon was

moving in for the kill.

Vaber didn't stand a chance. A bomb clutched under each arm, he stumbled towards the Dalek city, blind to everything except the need to justify himself against Taron Taron who'd taken away the command that was rightfully his own. A bulky shape loomed out of the darkness – a fur-clad Spiridon. Vaber turned to run, but other shapes surrounded him. They threw themselves upon him, and claw-like hands gripped him so that he could not move. He heard a throaty whisper. 'Take him to the Daleks!'

## 9 Vaber's Sacrifice

Hiding nearby in the jungle, Taron and Codal watched appalled. They had been close behind Vaber, about to seize him themselves and recover the bombs, when they had witnessed his capture by the Spiridon patrol. There was no chance of a rescue. The Spiridons were too numerous. The two Thals watched helplessly as Vaber was hurried away. Taron tapped Codal's shoulder. 'We've got to recover those bombs. Come on.' Silently they began following the Spiridons and their prisoner.

The Doctor, Jo, Rebec and Latep huddled around the little fire. 'What possessed Vaber to go rushing off like that?' said the Doctor.

Rebec sighed. 'Once he'd worked out his plan, he couldn't bear to wait.'

'What plan?'

'To blow up the Dalek refrigeration unit. He thought if he destroyed that, he'd destroy the Daleks.'

The Doctor looked at her in horror. 'On the contrary – he'd bring their army to life.'

'Doctor,' said Jo, 'if you'd only remember to *explain* things occasionally.'

The Doctor took a deep breath. 'All right, I will. The Daleks I saw in that arsenal-place, next to the cooling chamber, were in a state of suspended animation. No ageing process, no degeneration, no maintenance needed. An *army* of Daleks, in cold storage until it's needed. *That's* why the Daleks came to this planet. To use it as a base. The invisibility business is only a side-line. What they were really after was the planet's core of ice. But they found the icecano was too unstable, so they built the refrigeration unit.' He looked round at the others. 'The minute the temperature rises, all those Daleks will come to life.'

He was interrupted by a hoarse voice from the darkness. 'Jo! I have found you.'

The Doctor leaped to his feet. A bulky figure moved into the circle of firelight, fur-clad and carrying an ugly-looking club. Jo said, 'It's all right, Doctor. It's Wester – the Spiridon who helped me when I was ill.'

'Then I owe you a great debt. Please accept my thanks.' He held out his hand and felt it gripped by another invisible one, emerging from the wide sleeve of the furs.

The whispering voice said, 'I have news from the city. The Daleks have prepared a bacteriological weapon. It will destroy all life on this planet, except for the Daleks and their servants. I wanted to warn you. Now I shall go back to the city to try to prevent them.'

The Doctor's voice was grave. 'Thank you for warning us.'

Jo started to say, 'Wester, be careful. . . .' But the Spiridon had already gone.

The Doctor said decisively, 'We'll move out at full light.'

'What about Taron and the others?' Rebec protested.

'We'll wait till dawn. If they're not back by then – we must go without them.'

The Spiridon patrol moved swiftly down the trail. The last Spiridon of the patrol was some way behind the others. The patrol heard nothing, as Codal and Taron leaped from hiding and bore the rear guard Spiridon to the ground, stunning him with swift blows. Taron stripped the fur robes from the invisible creature and pulled them on himself. 'I'll try to get close to Vaber,' he whispered. 'Be ready to move in when I jump the guards.'

Codal nodded, and Taron ran to join himself to the rest of the patrol. Codal followed at a distance, keeping under cover.

Taron caught up with the patrol. Indistinguishable from the Spiridons in his furs. The patrol moved on for quite some way, and still Taron made no move. Codal began to worry. Surely they'd be at the Dalek city before very long. Dodging through a clump of bushes he crept closer to the last figure in the patrol, tapping it on the shoulder. 'Taron,' he whispered, 'surely it's time we. . . .' The figure swung round. To his horror Codal saw that there was no face beneath the hood, just emptiness. He was talking to a genuine Spiridon.

The creature jumped him, invisible hands reaching out. Codal struggled desperately, but the Spiridon was very strong. Suddenly his opponent jerked and went limp. Yet another fur-clad figure had appeared and stunned it, and this one *was* Taron. 'What do you think you're doing?' he whispered angrily.

Codal laughed hysterically. 'I *spoke* to him. I thought he was you!'

'Nearly got yourself killed,' muttered Taron. 'Still, it's provided us with another disguise. Get these furs on and follow me. I've marked out the one carrying the bombs. When I jump him, you grab the bombs and run. They're the first priority.'

'What about you?'

'As soon as you're away I'll free Vaber. We'll make a run for it.'

Taron was just about to make his move when ill-fortune struck. The Spiridons encountered a patrol of Daleks, and came to an immediate full stop. A Dalek voice rasped, 'Halt. What is happening?'

Eager for praise, a Spiridon whispered, 'We have captured one of the aliens. He was carrying explosives.' The Dalek patrol leader glided forward to where Vaber was held by two Spiridons. 'Where are your fellow-Thals hiding?'

Vaber's voice was defiant. 'No idea. You want them, you find them.'

'Release him. Move away.' The Spiridons holding Vaber let go and stepped back. The Dalek's gun-stick swung to cover Vaber's isolated figure. 'Answer or I will exterminate you.'

Vaber seemed to wilt beneath the threat. 'No . . . don't fire. I'll take you to them.'

Vaber turned as if to lead the way. Suddenly he ducked between the two Spiridons and sprinted for the cover of the jungle. An outlying Spiridon grabbed him and they grappled desperately. Vaber managed to swing the Spiridon round, using him as a shield. But the death of one of their own servants was of little concern to the Daleks. The patrol leader ordered, 'Open fire!' Dalek guns blazed and Vaber and the Spiridon were blasted down together.

As the Daleks moved towards the bodies, Taron and Codal acted. Moving in on the Spiridon with the bombs, they clubbed him to the ground, grabbed one bomb each and made off into the jungle. Confused by the flurry of movement the Daleks swung round and opened fire. But they were too late. Taron and Codal had disappeared. With angry cries of 'Pursue! Pursue and exterminate!' the Daleks followed them.

A Dalek technician was reporting to the Chief Scientist. 'The antidote is prepared and ready to be administered.'

The technician produced a square, gun-shaped device mounted on a trolley and touched a control. There was a fierce hiss and a fine cloud of mist covered them both. 'Synthesised anti-bacteriological elements have been released. The elements provide immunity on contact.'

'Approved. I will order all Dalek units and Spiridon slave-workers to assemble for treatment. Are the bacteria now ready for release?'

Proudly the Dalek technician gestured towards the other trolley. 'The growth process is complete. Removal of the container tops is all that is required to allow bacteria to enter the atmosphere.'

Dawn came at last, with a sudden blaze of light and heat. Thankfully the Doctor let the fire die down. The creatures of Spiridon had returned to their lairs. The Doctor disappeared on a brief scouting expedition, and Latep stood scanning the plain from on top of a high rock. Jo heard him call out, 'Someone's coming. It's Codal and Taron!' Codal and Taron hurried into camp, the Doctor close behind them.

There was time only for the briefest of reunions. A saddened silence fell as Taron told them of Vaber's fate. The Doctor said, 'He was rash and impulsive, poor fellow, but he was right about one thing. It *is* time we went over to the attack.'

Defensively Taron said, 'If you can provide me with a *workable* plan. . . .'

'I think I can,' said the Doctor gently. 'I've been thinking it out for most of the night. Will you trust me?'

Taron nodded wearily. 'I'll leave it to you, Doctor. You can't do worse than I've done.'

'Nonsense,' said the Doctor briskly. 'We gathered invaluable information

on that first attack. Now it's time to put our knowledge to good use. First, we need to get back inside the city, undetected this time.'

'And how do we do that?'

'Well, the first thing we must do,' said the Doctor cheerfully, 'is to get ourselves spotted by a Dalek patrol!'

There was an astonished silence. The Doctor smiled, and said mysteriously, 'Come with me, will you, Taron? The rest of you wait here.'

The Doctor led Taron a little way into the hills that bordered the Plain of Stones. They stopped by a small round pool in the rocky ground. 'There!' said the Doctor triumphantly. 'Found it this morning when I was having a scout around.'

Taron was unimpressed. 'This planet is full of these pools, Doctor. They're liquid ice, fed from the icecano.'

'Exactly. It's odd, but water on this planet seems to sustain sub-zero temperatures and still remain liquid.'

Taron said, 'I'm sorry Doctor but I *still* don't see. . . .'

Patiently, the Doctor explained, 'Daleks are vulnerable to extremely low temperatures. At sub-zero levels, they wouldn't be able to function at all. *Now* do you see?'

A slow smile spread over Taron's face. 'Yes . . . yes, I do see.' He started scanning the landscape around them. 'Let's look round and plan a way to make it work.'

The Doctor was smiling too. 'It's a good feeling, isn't it when the hunted become the hunters?'

## 10 Return to the City

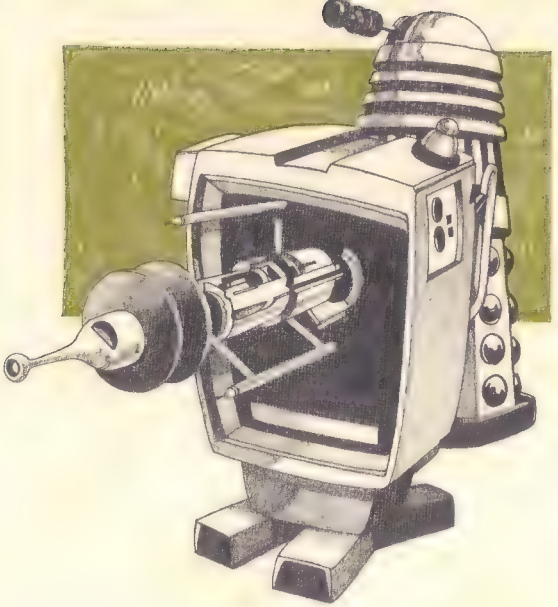
After the death of the captured alien, and the escape of two others with their recovered bombs, the Dalek Commander ordered an intensified search of the Plain of Stones. He ordered the searchers to work in twos to maximise the number of patrols. The leader of the first patrol in the area knew that the aliens were cunning and desperate. He was surprised when his patrol found two of them almost immediately. Perhaps tiredness was making them careless.

The two aliens, both young and small, were standing in the middle of the track that led to the Plain of Stones, almost as if they *wanted* to be seen. When the patrol spotted them, they turned and ran off between the rocks. They moved slowly, as if very tired, and the patrol soon began to overhaul them. 'Pursue and exterminate,' ordered the patrol leader. 'Supreme Command advise no prisoners to be taken. They must be exterminated!'

The aliens disappeared once they were amongst the rocks, and the Daleks were forced to hunt for them.

Taron, Rebec and the Doctor were crouched behind a giant boulder beside the trail to the ice pool. The place was carefully chosen. The path was narrow here, and the Daleks would have to move in single file. Jo and Latep dashed along the path and joined them in hiding. Panting, Jo said, 'The Daleks are right behind us.'

'Right,' ordered the Doctor. 'Scatter, I'll take over.' Jo, Codal and Rebec took cover nearby. Taron ran down the trail to the pool. The Doctor waited. When the two Daleks came in sight, he stepped from hiding, then instantly ducked back. The blast from a Dalek gun charred the rock just above his head. The patrol leader ordered, 'Give protective fire.' The patrol leader moved off alone. The second Dalek followed more slowly, its gun-stick swivelling



suspiciously all around.

The patrol leader rounded the boulder and moved cautiously along the trail that bordered the ice pool. Suddenly the Doctor appeared from behind one of the rocks, disappearing again almost at once. The patrol leader moved forward. Another blast from its gun seared the rocks, very close to the Doctor. The Dalek was close to the edge of the pool now. Suddenly Taron appeared from hiding. He charged the Dalek, gripping it from behind so the gun could not bear, and started shoving it by main force towards the ice pool. Circling behind the Dalek, the Doctor ran to help.

Slowly they edged it towards the pool. The Dalek resisted with all its strength. All the time it was calling, 'Assist! Assist! I am being attacked!'

Further down the trail, Jo saw the second Dalek speed forward to answer the call, and realised that she had to delay it. She dashed across the trail and the Dalek swung round in pursuit. Jo's foot turned on a small rock and she crashed to the ground, sprawled helplessly on the path as the Dalek bore down on her.

As the Dalek was about to fire, Latep jumped on top of it from the top of a nearby boulder. He had a Spiridon robe in his hands, and he threw it over the top of the Dalek covering the eye-stalk completely.

The Dalek spun round helplessly, shrieking. 'Vision circuits impaired. I am losing control.'

Somehow Latep stayed perched on top of the Dalek, holding the robe firmly in place. Codal ran from hiding, grabbed the Dalek's gun-stick and jammed it upwards, so that the blast of its firing exploded harmlessly in the air. Rebec

and Jo came to help him, and between the three of them they shoved the helpless Dalek along the path taken by the patrol leader.

As they rounded the boulder, the Doctor and Taron gave the patrol leader a mighty shove that sent it splashing into the ice pool. The waters bubbled and hissed, and the patrol leader's cries ended abruptly. The Doctor and Taron ran to help deal with the second Dalek. Latep leaped from its back, and joined them. Propelled by five pairs of arms, the Dalek shot off the path like a rocket and splashed into the ice pond beside its leader

There was a chorus of shouts and hurrahs from the bank. Jo and the Doctor joined the jubilant Thals in an orgy of hand-shaking and back-slapping. Then the Doctor held up his hand for silence. 'Well done, all of you. But remember, we still have work to do!'

Taron and Latep switched on their heat units and waded into the icy water. 'Don't get directly in front of their guns,' warned the Doctor. 'They may still be dangerous. Pull the top sections clear.'

Taron and Latep did so, shuddering at the sight of the hideous creatures housed inside. 'Are they dead?' called the Doctor.

Latep swallowed and said, 'I think so. The cold must have killed them instantly.'

'You'll have to get the bodies out and throw them in the pond.'

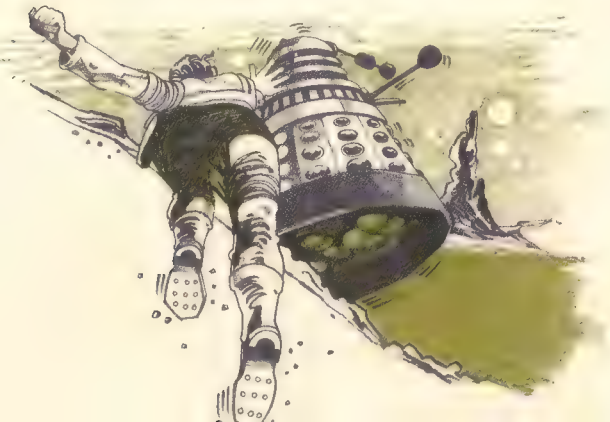
Thankful for their thick space-gauntlets, Taron and Latep groped inside the machine-casings, and threw the twisted bodies into the pool. There was a general sigh of relief as they vanished beneath the surface. 'Now,' said the Doctor more cheerfully. 'Let's get the machines out onto the bank.'

They began heaving the machines out of the pond and on to the path.

A long file of Spiridon slave workers was moving slowly into the Dalek city, reporting for their immunisation treatments as ordered. No one noticed when Wester slipped from the jungle and joined the line.

Inside the city a Dalek was waiting to direct them. 'Spiridon workers will proceed to level four to await treatment.' The file of docile slaves did as they were ordered. All except for Wester, who slipped away from the line and made his way towards the Dalek laboratory. He knew from other Spiridons in his resistance group that this was where the bacteria containers were being kept.

No one stopped him on his way there. There was a feeling of great



excitement in the Dalek city, with Daleks bustling in all directions. But at the door to the control room, he was halted by a Dalek guard 'Stop. What are you doing here?'

'I have a vital message for the Chief Scientist.'

'The Chief Scientist is occupied. You may enter the laboratory and report when he is free.' Scarcely able to believe his own luck, Wester crossed the control area and waited by the sealed door to the laboratory. It hissed open to admit him, hissed closed behind him once he was inside.

Wester saw a group of Daleks clustered round a bulbous gun-shaped device mounted on a metal trolley. Beside it on another trolley were a number of transparent jars, their lids firmly sealed.

Wester made no attempt to approach the group of Daleks. Instead he slipped into the farthest corner of the laboratory. The Daleks seemed to be arguing amongst themselves.

The Chief Scientist was asking angrily, 'Why are you not ready to administer the protective treatments as ordered?'

'There is a minor fault in the mechanism. I shall rectify it immediately.'

'Make all speed. Dalek units and Spiridon workers are assembled and waiting.'

Wester slowly slipped the fur-robes, symbol of slavery, from his body and stuffed them under a machine. Protected by his invisibility, the only weapon of his people, he waited for his chance.

Close to the entrance to the Dalek city an oddly assorted group was assembled. One Dalek, three fur-clad Spiridons, a Thal and a human female. Only the last two were actually what they seemed. Inside the machine casing of the Dalek crouched Rebec, ready to act as their passport into the city. The three Spiridons were Codal, Taron and the Doctor. Another unfortunate Spiridon had been ambushed to provide a third set of robes.

The Doctor turned to Jo and Latep. 'Are you sure you can find the right ventilation shaft?'

Latep nodded. 'Taron's given us a map.'

Jo said, 'I wish we could all go in together, Doctor.'

'A two-pronged attack doubles our chances of success. I want you two to detonate your bomb in the tunnel near the cooling unit but whatever you do, don't damage the unit itself. That must go on functioning.'

'We understand, Doctor.'

'Off you go then - and good luck!'

Jo and Latep moved away into the jungle. The Doctor looked anxiously after them for a moment, then gave Rebec's Dalek a hearty slap. A little jerkily she propelled it forwards. The Doctor, Taron and Codal followed, three Spiridon slaves being escorted back to the city by one of their Dalek masters. Codal hugged the remaining bomb, concealing it under the fur robes.

All went well until they reached the entrance itself. A Dalek guard glided forward to challenge them. 'All units were ordered back to base some time ago. You are late.'

Rebec's Dalek naturally enough said nothing. The guard said angrily, 'Report to central control immediately.' It moved aside, and all four of them entered the city.

When they emerged from the lift, it was easy enough to lose themselves in the general bustle of Daleks. There was a crowd assembled outside the control area, all with an air of expectant waiting. The Doctor and his party edged their way across until they were at a point where they could look through the glass wall into the sealed-off laboratory. They could see a little group of

Daleks clustered round a trolley. They were working on a gun-like device. Nearby stood another trolley, holding sealed containers.

'What are they doing?' whispered Taron.

'I imagine they're preparing to immunise this lot,' said the Doctor quietly. 'Those jars must be the bacteria culture.'

'If we can get close enough to the immunisation machine to wreck it, they won't be able to release the bacteria without killing themselves.' The Doctor became silent, trying to work out a feasible plan of attack.

The leading Dalek technician moved back from the immunisation gun. 'Fault rectified. Equipment now fully-operational.'

The Chief Scientist ordered, 'Start to administer protective treatment to all units immediately. When that is done, the jars of bacteria culture will be opened at selected points on the planet. All non-immunised life will be exterminated.'

The technician started to push the trolley towards the door. Suddenly the immunisation gun rose in the air of its own accord and smashed down onto the trolley with the bacteria cultures, smashing most of the jars.

Taron gripped the Doctor's arm. 'There's an invisible Spiridon in there.'

'It's Wester,' said the Doctor, 'It must be. He said he was going to stop them. He's better qualified for sabotage than we are.'

By now there was pandemonium in the laboratory. Those jars still unsmashed were flying through the air, breaking open against the walls. The Dalek scientists milled about, trying to find their invisible opponent.

'He's released the bacteria while he's still in there,' said Taron. 'He's committed suicide.'

The Doctor's voice was sad. 'I know. Listen!' The Dalek Chief Scientist was speaking over some kind of public address system. 'The door to this laboratory must never be opened. No one can enter. We can never leave here.'

'Don't you see?' whispered the Doctor. 'The Daleks still aren't immunised. If they open that hermetically sealed door, the bacteria will escape and destroy *them*. Wester's done our job for us, better than we ever could . . . but it's cost him his own life.'

Saddened they turned away. Daleks and Spiridons were milling about in confusion, and it wasn't difficult to slip away to one of the side corridors. 'We must find a lift and reach the lower levels,' ordered the Doctor. They were almost up to the lift doors when a Dalek appeared at the end of the corridor. It glided towards them. 'Spiridon slave workers were ordered to wait on level four. Move!'

Rebec, inside her Dalek, stayed motionless. The Doctor, Taron and Codal huddled inside their furs, and slowly turned. As they came level with the Dalek it ordered, 'Wait!' Its eye-stick swivelled downwards. The Doctor followed the direction of its gaze. Taron's booted foot had emerged from his concealing fur robes. Suddenly the Dalek shrieked, 'You are not Spiridons. You are alien intruders. Emergency! Emergency! Emergency!'

# 11 An Army Awakes

The Doctor made no attempt to bluff. He whipped off his furs, flung them over the Dalek's eye-stalk and gave it a shove that sent it reeling down the corridor. He and Taron grabbed Rebec's Dalek and shoved it along at full speed. Behind them they could hear a Dalek voice screeching out over the loudspeaker system. 'Alert! Alert! Alert! Aliens at liberty in city. Instigate maximum security conditions. Alert! Alert! Alert! Aliens accompanied by impostor Dalek. Find and exterminate!'

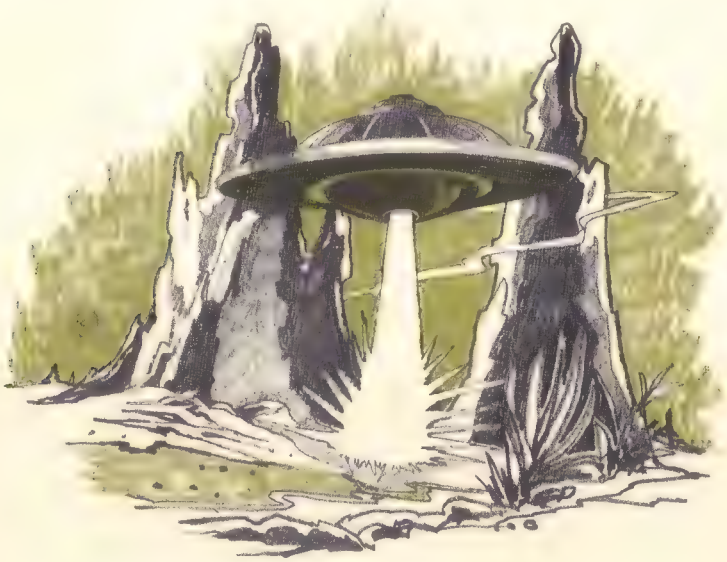
A Dalek patrol came round a corner to find itself facing two aliens, one each side of a Dalek. The aliens dodged back out of sight, but the Dalek did not move. Realising that this must be the impostor, the patrol opened fire.

The Dalek spun round, smoke and flames belching from its top-section. 'Impostor Dalek destroyed,' reported the patrol leader.

Just around the corner the Doctor, Taron, Codal and Rebec were running for their lives. The Doctor yelled to Rebec, 'You stopped being a Dalek just in time!' Rebec smiled back, too breathless to talk.

They found a lift at last and dashed inside. The Doctor adjusted the controls to take them directly to level zero. 'We've got to get to that arsenal,' he explained.

'Then what?' demanded Codal. 'You still haven't told us *all* your plan, Doctor. What use is one bomb against an army of Daleks?'



'A great deal of use in the right place,' said the Doctor mysteriously. 'We can't destroy that army – but we *can* stop it ever going into action.'

The lift door opened and they emerged on the lowest level. They ran to the cooling section from which they had escaped such a short time ago. The remains of the anti-gravitational disc still littered the area beneath the wrecked cowl, and they passed through the arch that the Daleks had cut in their own door. Rebec shuddered, remembering the nightmare journey up the chimney. Now they were back again. The only difference was that they now had a bomb – and the Doctor's plan.

The Doctor himself seemed cheerful and confident. 'See what you can find to make a barricade and seal off the end of that corridor,' he ordered. 'The Daleks are bound to arrive soon. We've got to delay them as long as we can.'

Taron and Codal ripped up work-benches and shoved pieces of machinery into quite a formidable barrier. The Doctor and Rebec helped them. All their lives depended on the strength of the final result.

In the control centre the Expedition Commander was listening to a report from his second-in-command. 'Message from Supreme Command spacecraft. The Dalek Supreme will shortly arrive on Spiridon. He will assume total command of all operations on this planet.'

The Commander accepted the news without complaint. 'Understood. Continue.'

'Supreme Command have identified the alien who is not of Thal origin. He is the one known as the Doctor, the greatest enemy of the Daleks.'

The Commander considered. 'He will have much valuable knowledge. He must be captured and interrogated.'

Jo and Latep were still quite close to the Dalek city when they saw the little spacecraft come in to land. Sinister and saucer-like, it glided into an open space near the city entrance. Crouched at the edge of the jungle, Jo and Latep watched.

A ramp appeared silently from the body of the ship. A door opened and two Daleks glided down it, taking up a position at the bottom, one at each side. A third Dalek appeared at the top of the ramp. Its body-colour was not the usual silver but a gleaming black, and its dome shone brightly in gold The Dalek glided smoothly down the ramp and set off towards the city, followed by the two aides.

Latep's voice was full of awe. 'That was the Dalek Supreme, head of the Supreme Council. Second only to the Emperor himself.'

Jo was staring thoughtfully at the spaceship. 'That doesn't look too different from your own craft. Could you fly it?'

Latep nodded. 'Any of us could. We've studied captured Dalek ships.'

'Then you could use it to get back to Skaro! Don't you see, you're not marooned here any more. I wish we could tell the others.'

'Maybe it's as well we can't,' said Latep seriously. 'There's something to be said for thinking you're on a suicide mission. You've got nothing to lose.'

The Doctor stood looking at the machinery in the cooling chamber and cursed fluently in an obscure Martian dialect. Taron couldn't understand the words, but the meaning was plain enough. 'What's the matter, Doctor?'

'I was hoping to find a way to lock these controls in the "on" position. As soon as the refrigeration's switched off, the Dalek army is going to start coming to life. Won't work though, the main switches must be in the central control area. We'll have to use my other plan. Taron and Rebec, keep an eye

on the barricade. Codal, you come with me.' He led Codal out into the corridor and used his sonic screwdriver to open the smaller door that led into the Dalek arsenal. Codal stopped short at the sight of the immense army of Daleks, but the Doctor said cheerfully. 'Don't worry, they're all fast asleep.' He pointed to a ramp leading up to the metal catwalks surrounding the huge cavern. 'We're going up onto those catwalks, Codal, you one way and me the other. We're looking for a nice large fissure in those walls.'

The Dalek Supreme, flanked by his aides, stood in central control. The area had been cleared. The Dalek Commander stood before him. 'The Supreme Council has ordered our army to be activated immediately. The invasion of the galaxy will begin at once. Close down refrigeration unit.'

'I obey.'

Latep and Jo stood at the top of the chimney shaft. Latep had rigged up a kind of derrick made from tree branches gathered on the way. At one end an immense coil of rope was secured to it, and he was paying the other down into the shaft. Jo looked on full of misgiving. Suppose that contraption doesn't hold?'

Latep grinned. 'It'll hold.'

'Well, suppose the rope isn't long enough?'

'Jo, we've got every piece of rope in the entire expedition fastened together. Believe me, it'll be long enough. Your friend the Doctor worked it out.'

Jo smiled wanly. 'It's not only the trip down that worries me it's what we'll find at the bottom.'

The Doctor was still searching when he heard Codal call, 'Doctor – I think I've found what you need.'

The Doctor ran along the catwalk to join him. Codal, the precious bomb at his feet, was standing by a jagged hole in the rock wall.

The Doctor examined it with interest. 'Now that looks promising How deep is it?'

'Pretty deep I think, I can get my arm inside.' Codal demonstrated.

Taron appeared in the doorway of the arsenal. 'Doctor, the Daleks have reached the barricade they're attacking it now! And the cooling unit seems to have been switched off. The temperature's rising.'

The Doctor paused. 'So it is. It'll only take a very small rise for these Daleks to start moving. We've got to work fast, Codal.'

Codal wasn't listening. He was staring fascinatedly down into the arsenal itself, his eyes wide with horror. 'Look, Doctor.' He pointed. The Doctor looked. In the ranks of Daleks below him, gun-sticks were swivelling uncertainly, eye-stalks waving in unfocussed menace. Some of the Daleks were shifting a little, bumping gently against their neighbours. Sluggishly, reluctantly, but quite unmistakably, the army of the Daleks had started to come to life!

## 12 The Last Gamble

Taron and Rebec looked down the corridor from the cooling chamber towards the barricade at the other end. It was shuddering rhythmically as Daleks hurled themselves against it. At first they'd tried blasting it aside, but that had simply melted the metal and welded it together more strongly. Now they were using brute force, hurling themselves against it in relays like living battering rams. It was a slow and clumsy method, but effective. Already parts

of the barricade were beginning to fall away.

'A couple more tries and the whole lot is going to come down,' said Taron. 'Time we pulled back.'

They went through the door into the Dalek arsenal, and Taron touched the controls to shut the door. There was no response. Taron shook his head. 'It's no good, the Daleks have cut off the power.' They climbed the ramp to the catwalk and joined the Doctor and Codal, who were busily enlarging their fissure by clearing out the rubble. 'The door won't shut, there's still no sign of Jo and Latep, and the Daleks are nearly through the barricade,' reported Taron briskly. 'What now?'

The Doctor considered for a moment. 'They must have got all these Daleks *in* here somehow, and presumably they've provided a way to get them *out*. I don't suppose they're planning to take them up in the lifts, one by one! My guess is that one of these catwalks will lead to an exit, probably some sort of ramp. See what you can find.'

Taron and Rebec raced away, and the Doctor stretched a long arm inside the fissure. 'That seems to be clear enough. Pass me that bomb, Codal.'

Codal swung round to pick up the bomb – and caught it with the side of his foot as he turned. The bomb rolled slowly towards the edge of the catwalk. Codal dived for it, but he was just too late. Eluding his fingers by inches the bomb rolled off the edge and fell to the area below.

The Doctor and Codal braced themselves but nothing happened. Codal peered over the edge. 'There it is, down there.' He pointed. The bomb had rolled a few feet and lodged against the base of one of the Daleks. The Doctor looked. The drop was only about ten feet. Without hesitation he lowered himself over the edge, hung by his hands for a moment and dropped.

For a moment the Doctor stood still, looking around him. Talk about Daniel in the lions' den, he thought. Here he was standing in full view of an entire Dalek army. The Daleks seemed dimly aware of his presence, but were still too dormant to do anything about it. Eye-stalks swivelled slowly in an attempt to follow his progress as he picked his way between the stirring forms. Sucker-arms and gun-sticks waved erratically at him, and the slow-moving bodies of the Daleks jostled him as he moved. Working his way through the moving crowd of Daleks the Doctor moved towards the bomb. The Dalek against which it was resting started moving too, and the bomb rolled further away, to be knocked further still by yet another Dalek. It was like a ghastly slow-motion football game, thought the Doctor, with thousands of players on the other side.

Dodging through the obstructing Daleks he reached the bomb at last and scooped it up. Codal was watching anxiously from the catwalk, and the Doctor called 'Here!' and tossed him the bomb. With a gasp Codal caught it. The Doctor worked his way back to the catwalk. He jumped to swing himself up, but it was too high – he couldn't get a good enough run in the crowded space. The Daleks were pressing in on him, now, as if trying to crush him. The Doctor climbed nimbly on top of the nearest Dalek and used it as a launch-pad for a flying leap to the catwalk. Codal was examining the bomb anxiously. 'I *think* it's all right, but the timing mechanism's damaged. It'll take me a few minutes to fix it.' He produced tools from his belt and got to work.

Taron and Rebec came running back along the catwalk. 'You were right, Doctor,' said Rebec excitedly. 'There's a huge spiral ramp over on the far side. It must lead right to the surface.'

'Excellent. That's our way out, when the time comes.'

'Isn't it about time you explained the rest of your plan?' asked Taron.

The Doctor smiled. 'I'm sorry you've been very patient. Well, as you know,

this arsenal is right on the edge of the icecano. The Daleks built it there deliberately so they could use its cooling power. This whole area is honeycombed with ice tunnels and the icecano is unstable. If we explode our bomb in exactly the right place, it could make the icecano erupt *and* weaken the walls. The ice will break through and flood this entire cavern. That's the theory, anyway. We'll just have to hope it works.'

'The ice won't destroy them,' Rebec pointed out. 'It will just put them into suspended animation again.'

'With just one bomb that's the best we can hope for. Besides, once the chambers are flooded it will take centuries to seal off the icecano and get the Daleks out.'

The Doctor was interrupted by an explosion from outside the chamber. The Doctor turned to Codal. 'You'd better hurry, old chap. That sounded like the last of the barricade - they've used explosives!'

Back in the cooling chamber, a pair of legs appeared beneath the shattered cowling. Latep dropped to the ground, followed by Jo. He helped her up. 'You all right?'

'I think so,' she gasped. 'What's that noise?' From the corridor outside came a tremendous banging and clattering. They crept to the door and looked out. Daleks were pushing aside the remains of the shattered barricade. Jo looked anxiously at Latep. 'We've got to stop them!'

Latep unslung his bomb from its holder, and made a quick adjustment to the timing mechanism. He stepped boldly out into the corridor and bowled the bomb at the Daleks. A Dalek fired the moment he appeared. Latep threw himself backwards, the blast missing him by inches. For a moment the gleaming cylinder sat harmlessly in the middle of the Daleks. Then it exploded, shattering the nearest Dalek and bringing down a pile of rubble that blocked off half of the corridor.

Jo and Latep peered through the dust and smoke. At the far end of the corridor, Daleks were already beginning to push aside the rubble.

'They don't give up, do they?' said Jo. 'Let's go and find the Doctor.' They ran into the arsenal and along the catwalk. Rebec, Taron and the Doctor, still waiting for Codal to finish his repairs, greeted them enthusiastically. 'The Daleks are nearly here,' warned Jo. 'We used our bomb to try and stop them but it didn't work.'

Codal looked up. 'All right, I've finished.'

The Doctor gave a sigh of relief. 'Taron, you lead the others to the surface. Codal and I will set the bomb and follow you. Codal, set the bomb to detonate in thirty seconds.'

Taron, Rebec, Latep and Jo ran along the catwalk towards the ramp.

The Doctor watched Codal touch a control on the bomb. 'Detonator running,' said Codal, and passed the bomb hurriedly to the Doctor. The Doctor took the bomb from Codal and thrust it deep inside the rock-fissure, groping to wedge it in a good position.

In the corridor, the Daleks pushed aside the last of the rubble and glided towards the arsenal door. The Doctor withdrew his arm from the fissure. 'Right, that should do it. Come on!' They started running along the catwalk, just as the first Daleks glided through the arsenal door. The Daleks moved cautiously up the ramp, and up on to the catwalk.

The Doctor and Codal tore along the catwalk, leaving the Daleks behind. On the far side of the arsenal, Jo, Rebec and Taron were waiting. Behind them a huge spiral ramp led upwards into darkness.

The little group stood waiting, watching the Daleks move slowly along the catwalk. The Doctor could hear Codal counting under his breath. 'Seven, six,

five, four, three, two, one. . . .'

As the leading Dalek drew level with the fissure, the bomb exploded. There was a blast of flame and smoke from the fissure, and the Daleks were blown clear into the arsenal, crashing down upon the waking army. The catwalk was twisted and wrecked. For a moment it seemed that was all. 'It hasn't worked,' breathed Codal. 'They'll repair that damage in no time. We've failed.'

'Wait,' said the Doctor quietly. They heard a low rumbling. Cracks appeared in the rock wall by the fissure like the cracks made by dropping a stone onto thin ice. The cracks lengthened and spread. Suddenly a whole section of wall burst inwards and a river of liquid ice began flooding in. As the searing cold of the liquid ice rose around their bodies, the army of Daleks froze into immobility, resuming the long sleep from which they had so briefly awakened. From outside the arsenal came a threatening roar as ice broke through to other parts of the city. The icecano had erupted.

The Thals were already running up the spiral ramp. Jo tugged at the Doctor's sleeve. 'Come *on*, Doctor!'

The Doctor paused for a last look. The huge cavern was more than half-filled with ice by now, with helpless Daleks disappearing beneath the flood. '*Most* satisfactory,' said the Doctor contentedly. He and Jo ran after the others.

There were only three Daleks left in central control, the newly-arrived Dalek Supreme and his two aides. All the members of the Dalek expedition to Spiridon had been involved in the final attempt to capture the Doctor, and they had all been trapped by the erupting ice.

The leading aide was calmly reading the instruments in the control room, relaying a story of unmitigated disaster. 'Arsenal and all lower levels inundated. Molten ice rising rapidly through all levels. No response from any Dalek unit.'

The Dalek Supreme spun round. A trickle of molten ice was flowing through the door of central control. 'Advise Supreme Command. Attack force totally immobilised. No survivors. Set self-destruct on all instruments. We are abandoning.'

The Doctor and his friends were gathered round the ramp that led to the Dalek spacecraft. Codal had opened the door with ease, and was happily checking the controls. They heard a low hum of power as the ship was readied for take-off. 'Time to go,' said the Doctor cheerfully.

Rebec was holding Taron's hand. 'And now we *can* go back home to Skaro. That's something I never expected.'

Taron turned to the Doctor. 'There's no adequate way of thanking you, Doctor, but if there's ever anything we can do.'

Vastly embarrassed, the Doctor shook his head. Then he said, 'Wait, perhaps there is something. The Thals have always been a peace-loving people. I'd like to think they'll remain so. When you get back home, you'll be heroes. But don't glamorise your adventures. Don't make them think war is an exciting game. Tell them about the fear and the danger, the friends who won't be coming back.'

Taron nodded gravely. 'You can depend on us, Doctor. Goodbye.'

Taron and Rebec hurried into the ship. The Doctor looked for Latep and Jo, who had been talking a little apart from the others. They came up to him, Latep holding Jo's hand. He looked nervous but determined. 'I've been trying to persuade Jo to come back to Skaro with me, Doctor. Would you object?'

The Doctor looked down at Jo. 'Not if that's what she wants. Is it, Jo?'

Jo smiled tearfully at Latep. 'I'm sorry, Latep, I'm afraid it isn't. I like you very much but I've got my own world and my own life to get back to.'

Latep nodded. He held out his hand. Jo shook it, then kissed him on the cheek. He hurried up the ramp.

Taron appeared in the doorway. 'You'll need these to get back into your ship, Doctor,' he called, and tossed down a plastic-wrapped bundle. 'Goodbye, and thanks again!' They heard a chorus of goodbyes from inside the ship, then the door closed and the ramp retracted. Jo and the Doctor ran to the edge of the jungle, then turned to watch the take-off. With a roar of its booster-rockets the ship blasted-off, disappearing into the sky on its way back to Skaro.

The Doctor examined the bundle Taron had thrown to him. It held two sets of the plastic protective clothing and a spray. 'Very thoughtful of him,' he said. 'We'd have had a job getting back in the TARDIS without these.'

Jo wasn't listening. She pointed to the blockhouse guarding the entrance to the Dalek city. From it were emerging the Dalek Supreme and his two aides. 'Oh dear,' said the Doctor. 'I don't suppose they'll be very happy about the Thals taking their spaceship.'

'No,' said Jo. 'I don't suppose they will.'

Jo and the Doctor turned and ran. A blast from a Dalek gun set fire to the jungle beside them. As they hurried through the jungle they heard the outraged voice of the Dalek Supreme, 'Aliens! Pursue and exterminate!'

Fortunately for Jo and the Doctor, the Dalek Supreme and his aides were strangers on Spiridon, and knew far less about the planet than they did themselves. It didn't take long to lose them in the dense jungle. After that, it was just a matter of enduring the long trek back to the point where the TARDIS had first landed.

When they reached the ruined temple it took them quite a while to recognise the TARDIS. The sponge-plants had been unable actually to *eat* it, but they'd covered it so thoroughly with their fungus that it looked rather like a large, square sponge itself. The Doctor and Jo put on the protective plastic garments and the Doctor sprayed the TARDIS until he found the door. Then he concentrated on clearing the fungus with the spray so that he could open the door.

Jo looked on as he worked. The sponge-plants were spitting angrily. Jo shuddered as she saw the white blobs spattering on the Doctor's plastic coat.

Suddenly Jo saw three gleaming shapes approaching through the jungle. With incredible persistence, the Daleks had found them again.

'Hurry, Doctor,' said Jo, 'They'll spot us any minute now!'

She was right. Seconds later the leading Dalek fired and the blast scorched a patch of fungus from the TARDIS's side. But the Doctor had the door open now. 'Hurry, Jo,' he yelled. Jo dashed inside, and the Doctor slammed the door behind them.

By now all three Daleks were approaching the TARDIS, gun-sticks blazing. But they were too late. The TARDIS is invulnerable to outside attack. The Daleks watched helplessly as the TARDIS dematerialised, fragments of fungus dropping to the ground. Their greatest enemy had thwarted their plans and escaped their vengeance once again.

The Dalek Supreme turned arrogantly to his aides. It had been a day of total catastrophe, the army buried, the Spiridon expedition wiped out, the city destroyed. Almost any other life-form would have been crushed by despair. But Daleks do not recognise defeat. They ignore it and carry on their chosen path of conquest and destruction. There was utter confidence in the voice of

the Dalek Supreme. 'Supreme Command will despatch a rescue craft. Immediately on arrival, preparations will begin to free the army from the ice. We have been delayed, but not defeated.' The harsh voice rose triumphantly. *'The Daleks are never defeated!'*

Jo was feeding the protective garments into a disposal chute. 'Spiridon is one planet I *never* want to see again,' she said.

The Doctor finished his in-flight check, and moved to a monitor screen. He adjusted controls, until the screen filled with stars, and then narrowed the focus down to one particular planet. 'What about this one, Jo?' he asked mischievously. 'That's Skaro. Any regrets?'

Jo smiled a little sadly, thinking of Latep's earnest pleas. But she shook her head. 'No, Doctor. Skaro's not for me.'

The Doctor adjusted controls again. Another galaxy, and then another planet swam up on the screen.

'What about this little world?'

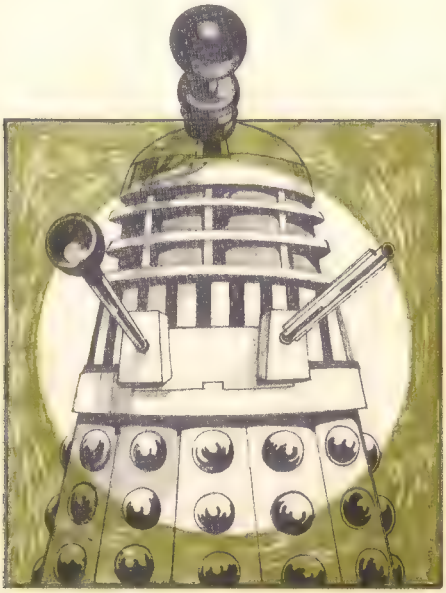
Jo looked at the planet floating peacefully in space. 'That's Earth isn't it?'

The Doctor nodded.

'Then that's the one I want to see,' said Jo firmly. 'Home please, Doctor!'

The Doctor smiled. 'Very well, Jo. Home it is.'

He leaned over the control console and set the co-ordinates for Earth.



# DOCTOR WHO AND THE DALEKS MEDIA HISTORY

Doctor Who and the Daleks have appeared in virtually every media. It is impossible to log their numerous guest appearances or to list the fantastic range of goods and toys with which they are associated. However, here for the first time is a classified chronology of the major television episodes, books, films and plays in which they have featured.

TARDIS, Doctor Who's time-machine.

A Dalek destroyed by the Exxilons; from the television series *Death to the Daleks*.

## TELEVISION

Programmes transmitted on BBC One

(Unless otherwise credited, all teleplays were written by Terry Nation. Initials indicate the name of the actor playing Doctor Who. William Hartnell (WH) Patrick Troughton (PT) Jon Pertwee (JP) Tom Baker (TB)

1963–64 *The Dead Planet* (seven episodes) (WH) In which the Daleks made their first appearance.

1964 *World's End* (six episodes) (WH) The Daleks invade and almost conquer Earth.

1965 *The Executioners* (six episodes) (WH) An epic battle with the Daleks *v.* the Mechanoids.

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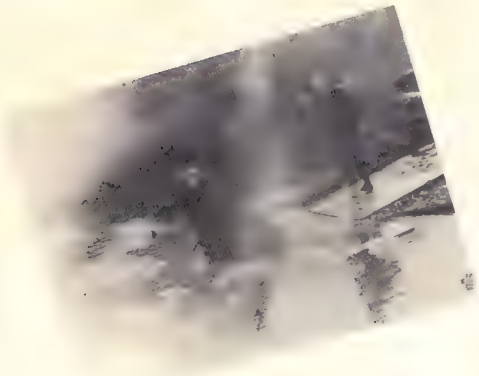
|---|---|
| 1965 | *The Nightmare Begins* (twelve episodes) (WH) Written with Dennis Spooner. A chase through time and space. |
| 1966 | *Mission to the Unknown* (one episode) (WH) Proving that the Dalek menace is as great as ever. |
| 1966–67 | *The Power of the Daleks* (six episodes) (PT) By David Whitaker. The Daleks develop a secret production system to increase their numbers. |
| 1967 | *The Evil of the Daleks* (seven episodes) By David Whitaker (PT) An attempt to turn humans into Daleks. |
| 1972 73 | *The Day of the Daleks* (four episodes) (JP) By Louis Marks. The Daleks and their slave creatures, the Ogrons. |
| 1973 | *Planet of the Daleks* (six episodes) (JP) Twelve thousand waiting Daleks immobilised under cryogenic conditions, and the temperature rising. |
| 1974 | *Death to the Daleks* (four episodes) (JP) The Daleks, the Exxilons and Doctor Who battle for control of a rare mineral oil. |
| 1975 | *Genesis of the Daleks* (four episodes plus a one programme compilation) (TB) New evidence contradicts original theories about the creation of the Daleks. Introduces Davros. |



Jon Pertwee as Doctor Who triumphing against a Dalek in a scene from the television series, *Doctor Who and the Planet of the Daleks*.

Daleks patrol Westminster Bridge, London, after their invasion of Earth as part of a plan to steal the Earth's magnetic core. A scene from the television series, *Doctor Who and the World's End*.

**FILMS**

*Doctor Who and the Daleks* Directed by Gordon Flemyng and starring Peter Cushing as Doctor Who, with Roy Castle and Jennie Linden. 1965.

*Daleks-Invasion Earth 2150 A.D.* Directed by Gordon Flemying and starring Peter Cushing as Doctor Who with Bernard Cribbins. 1966.

Jon Pertwee and Tom Baker (right), two of the actors who have taken the part of Doctor Who, under threat from the Daleks.

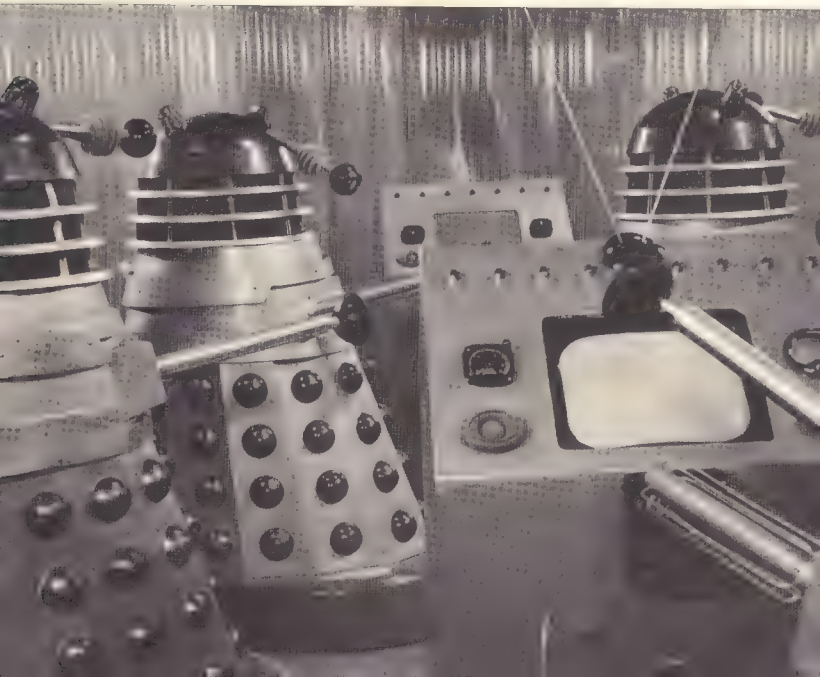
A Dalek explodes; in the background is the badly damaged Emperor Dalek: filmed during the television series *Doctor Who and the Evil of the Daleks*.

## THEATRE

In 1965 the Daleks made their début in London's West End.

In 1975 they appeared in a lavish production at the Adelphi Theatre called *Seven Keys to Doomsday* by Terrance Dicks. The play starred Trevor Martin as Doctor Who and was directed by Mick Hughes.

A scene from the film *Doctor Who and the Daleks* starring Peter Cushing, Roy Castle, Jennie Linden, Roberta Tovey.



# THE DALEK DEEP SPACE CRUISER

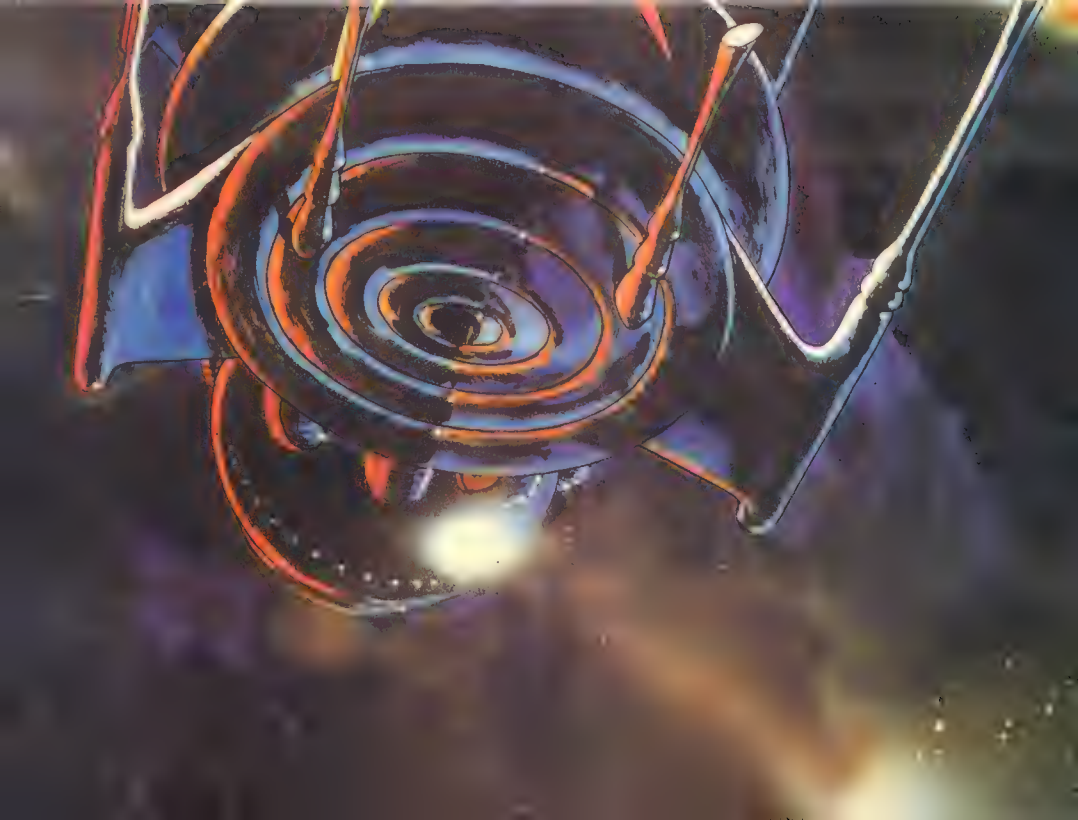
The Deep Space Cruiser is the main element of Dalek war fleets. After a series of disastrous defeats in battles with United Worlds ships, the Daleks recognized the need for a multi-role combat craft that was bigger, stronger and more powerful than anything that had been developed before. Dalek engineers set about designing a craft that was radically new in every aspect. Over thirty Earth years have been spent in testing and modifying the D.S.C. New high strength, nil weight alloys were created for the hull. A totally new technology was invented to construct the power units. Weaponry with destructive capability unequalled anywhere in the Universe was developed for the ship. Virtually all of the Daleks' resources were thrown in to the construction of the D.S.C. and this has resulted in a machine that is quite unique. Highly advanced concepts in engineering and design techniques have placed the Deep Space Cruiser in an unassailable position as the most deadly warship in all the known galaxies.

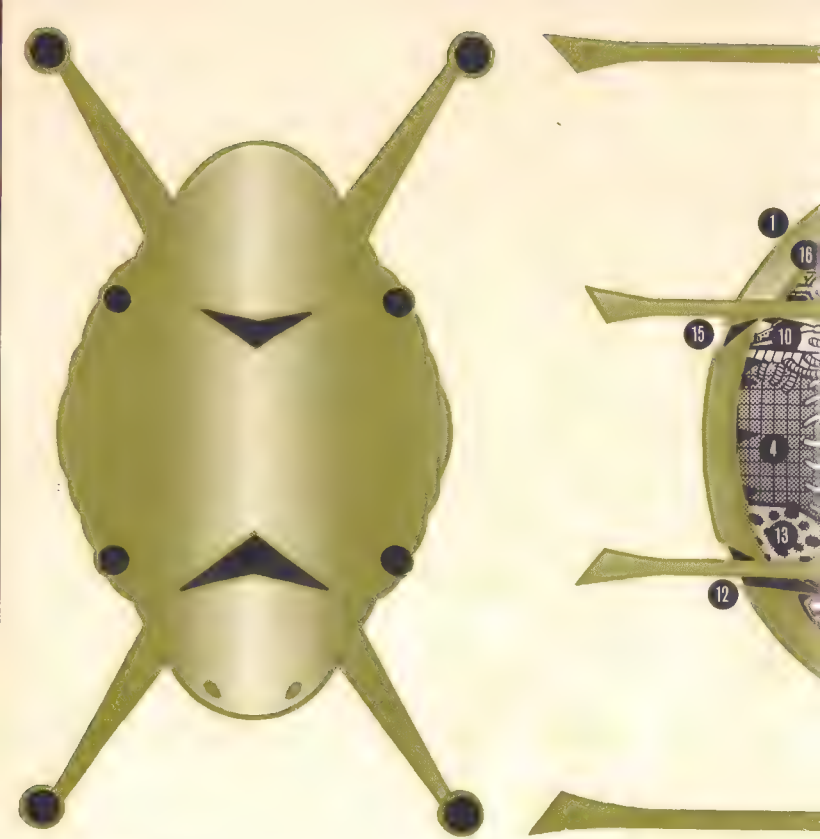
Recent intelligence reports estimate that more than one hundred D.S.C.'s are now in service and that a further five hundred are in an advanced state of construction.

The ship is divided into two principal sections: the primary hull and the detachable power module. The hull contains the massive computer command system that allows the ship to virtually 'think for itself'. Guidance systems, attack and defence centres, life maintainance and automatic damage repair overrides are housed on the twenty-four deck levels. The main hold is capable of housing one thousand Dalek fighting units, while the secondary hold provides hangar space for up to sixty attack/landing craft.

The power module is rechargeable and replaceable whilst in space. Fuelled by a controlled discharge anti-matter unit it is capable of powering the ship through a circumnavigation of the known galaxies. The unit powers the 'sweeper bands' that clear the forward course of space matter and debris. These 'sweeper bands' also provide an almost impenetrable defensive force field around the ship. The self-seeking weapons are capable of detecting and locking on to enemy craft and can destroy all known matter across enormous distance.

*The D.S.C. Type Battlecraft, Mark 1*
Overall length: 300,421 metres
Overall height: 112.9 metres
Unladen weight at .07 gravity condition: Zero
Top speed: Unlimited Light Loop (The speed of light constantly multiplied by itself)
Operating Crew: 35



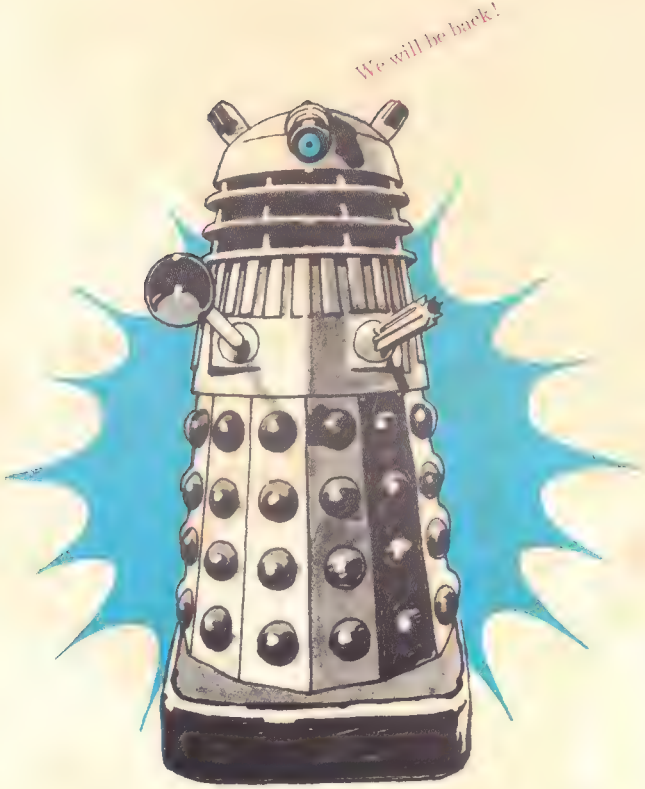


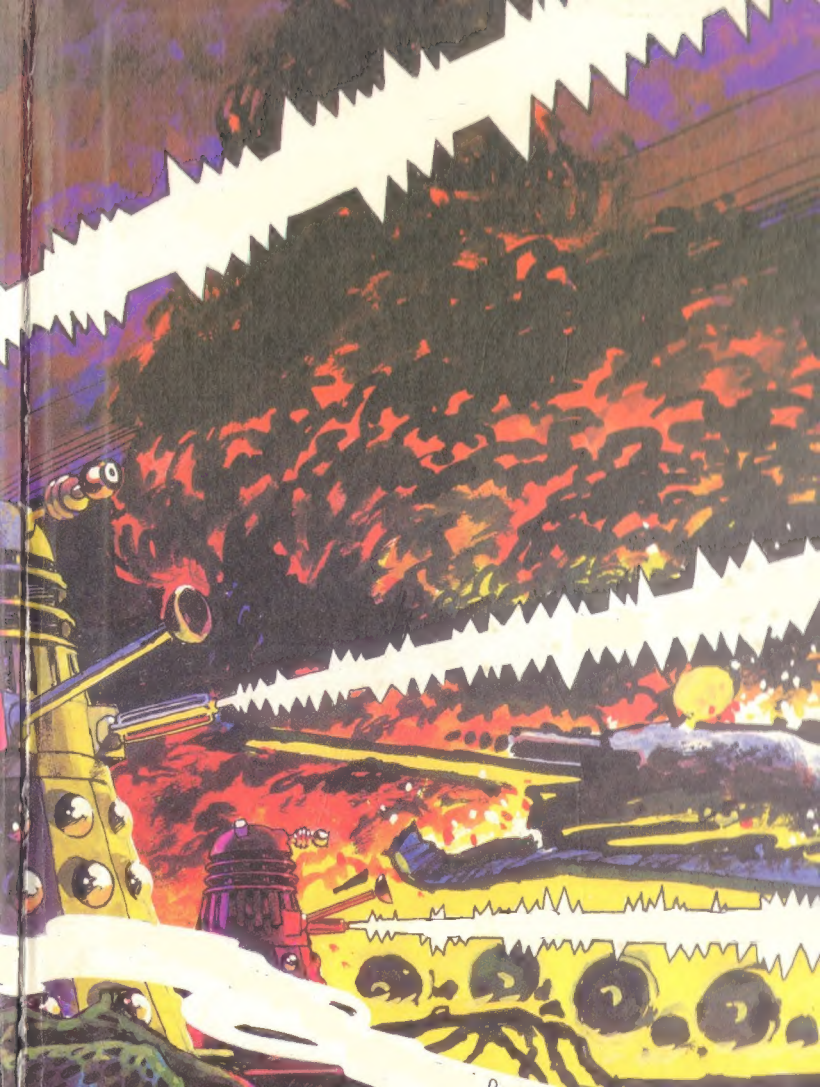

**KEY TO CUTAWAY**

1. POWER MODULE. CONTROLLED DISCHARGE ANTI-MATTER MOTORS.
2. MULTI DIRECTIONAL SHORT RANGE DESTRUCTORS.
3. COMPUTOR COMMAND SYSTEM.
4. SECONDARY COMPUTOR AND GUIDANCE SYSTEMS.
5. AUTOMATIC DAMAGE REPAIR SYSTEMS.
6. AUTO NAVIGATIONAL SYSTEM.
7. GRAVITY DEFLECTORS.
8. MAIN HULL. DOUBLE SHELL CONSTRUCTION OF ZERO WEIGHT, HIGH IMPACT ALLOY.
9. ET.IERIC COMMUNICATOR AND AU TO-TRANSLATOR.

# DALEK DEEP SPACE CRUISER MK.1

10. ATTACK LANDING CRAFT HANGAR.
11. LONG RANGE DESTRUCTORS
12. SPACE INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS COMPUTOR.
13. ALIEN DETENTION BLOCK AND INTERROGATION LABORATORY.
14. TRANSMISSION LINES POWERING ALL FUNCTIONS.
15. MAIN HOLD HOUSING DALEK INVASION FORCE.
16. SWEEPER BAND PROJECTORS.
17. OMEGA RAY SPACE TO GROUND WEAPONS.
18. ATTACK LANDING CRAFT LAUNCH AREA.
19. RADIATION ABSORBERS.
20. COMMAND DECK AND CREWS QUARTERS.


We will be back!



# DOCTOR WHO AND THE DALEKS OMNIBUS